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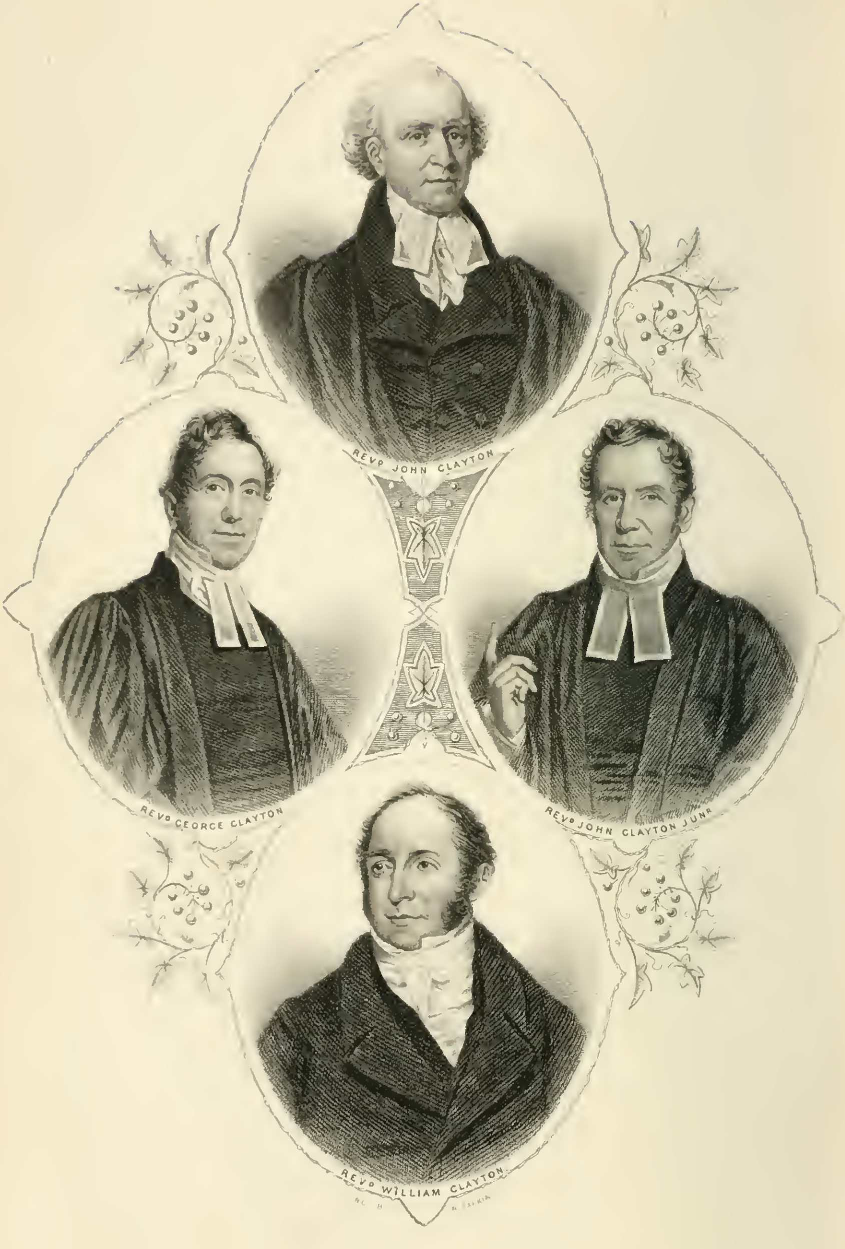

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MEMORIALS

OF THE

CLAYTON FAMILY.

With Unpublished Correspondence

OF THE

COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON, LADY GLENORCHY;
THE REVS. JOHN NEWTON, A. TOPLADY;
ETC., ETC., ETC.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS W. AVELING.

LONDON:
JACKSON, WALFORD, AND HODDER,
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1867.

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PREFACE.

It may appear somewhat out of date, to publish the Memoirs of a family, the eldest member of which—the principal personage introduced in this volume—was born more than a hundred years ago; somewhat strange to lead the reader back, along the beaten pathway of time, to the close of the reign of George the Second—to a period, fifteen years anterior to the birth of Napoleon and Wellington. Yet to recount the chief incidents in a good man's life,—extending over eighty-nine years, and spent among the most stirring episodes in the world's history; and that man one who was intimately associated with those to whom, under God, was owing the revival of religion in this country, at the close of the last century, and who himself occupied a prominent and noticeable position among them,—may, I think, be justified on its own merits.

But Mr. Clayton was the father of three sons, who, like himself, won and maintained, to the last, an honourable place in the church of God; and are worthy of a few flowers of remembrance. Several loving friends have brought their offerings, and I have striven,—it may be with an unskilful hand,—to

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weave them into a chaplet, and lay it,—not on their tomb, but where they would themselves have chosen it to be placed,—at the foot of that cross, whence they derived their hopes, and where they received an inspiration to a life of usefulness, for which each was most eminent.

The sources of these Memoirs have been various. The chief agency in their production may be ascribed to the Rev. George Clayton, who, in the closing part of his life, amused himself, in his retirement at Gaines, in drawing up an account of his venerated father, which is quoted at great length in the present volume. Indeed, the first hundred pages, after the introductory chapter, are for the most part a transcript of that document.

A very interesting paper has been sent to me, by A. C. Hobart Seymour, Esq., of Bath, containing reminiscences of the Rev. John Clayton, sen. This has been of great service; and I beg to offer my cordial thanks to the esteemed and venerable writer, for his spontaneously-offered contribution. In addition to those to whom acknowledgments are made in the body of the work, I am indebted to C. Godwin, and W. J. Clarke, Esqs., of Bath, for valuable hints; to the Revs. W. Ellis, T. Binney, R. Hamilton, of Brighton, and other friends, for permission to print their letters. I especially owe thanks to Mrs. Randall, Mr. John Clayton's elder daughter, and Mrs. Henry Joslin (formerly Mrs. George Clayton), for affording me every facility in the compilation of these Memorials, by giving me various kinds of information, and by unreservedly placing a large mass of papers at my disposal. Mr. George Clayton left behind him two thousand closely-written quarto pages of a diary, of which, as will be seen, I have made ample use. Unfortunately his brothers destroyed, or gave orders for the destruction,—after their death,—of memoranda which would have proved of great value to me, in preparing this volume. This fact is named, to account for the larger space devoted to Mr. George Clayton's memoirs, than to either of his brothers.

A prominent feature of the early portion of this volume is the letters of eminent personages, especially those of the Countess of Huntingdon. No small amount of difficulty has been experienced in deciphering the very crabbed handwriting of that excellent lady, who evidently wrote very rapidly, and rarely seems to have read, afterwards, what she had written; so that often an obscurity is noticeable in her communications, and the reader is not perfectly sure of her meaning. Still her letters display so much goodness, foresight, and administrative capacity, that I am sure—especially as they have never been before published—they will be read with interest; as will also those of Lady Glenorchy, the Revs. John Newton, A. Toplady, and others, of a past generation.

It has been quite a spiritual refreshment to me, to spend some months in familiar intercourse with the pious dead, by a perusal of their many letters, and especially the voluminous diaries of Mr. George Clayton.

Amid evidences of human frailty, which are, of course, to be expected, an ineradicable conviction has wrought itself into my soul, that those, whose Memoirs are here presented, were *pre-eminently* MEN OF GOD: and—for their devotion to the work of the Lord—their unfeigned and eminent piety—their steady adhesion to the great doctrines of Evangelical Truth—and the unswerving consistency with which their ecclesiastical principles were maintained, deserve to be held in loving and lasting remembrance.

Although nearly three generations have passed away, since Mr. Clayton, sen., began his career, I hope and believe that many still remain, to whom these pages, with all their imperfections, will prove acceptable; especially do I anticipate this to be the case with the very large circle of friends, still surviving, with whom the sons were associated in the bonds of Christian fellowship and action. To them, and to the blessing of the Great Master, I earnestly desire to commend this volume; which has been prepared amid the pressure of heavy pastoral duties; but which has afforded me, while writing it, not a few opportunities for profitable meditation, for both my own good, and that of the people of my charge. May similar opportunities be realized and enjoyed by all my readers!

THOMAS W. AVELING.

KINGSLAND, *April*, 1867.

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MEMORIALS
OF
THE CLAYTON FAMILY.

Chapter I.

A CENTURY AGO.

THE world has made rapid and marvellous strides, since the principal subject of the following memoirs first drew breath, in a little village in Lancashire. As he wandered amid the shadows of his native hills, he little dreamed of those momentous changes that were then impending; of the strange and stormy events which were to pass in wild array before him and his contemporaries; or anticipated the advent of men who shook the earth with their tread, and whose rise, culmination, and fall he should contemplate, from that prominent position which was assigned to him on the watchtower of one of the walls of Zion.

In Mr. Clayton's earliest years, the pulsations which were so soon to throb with mighty force in the hearts of vast populations, and reveal themselves in the life-throes of a whole continent, were only beginning to be felt. Distant mutterings were then but faintly audible which were to swell into a tumultuous and universal storm. The little cloud, at that time no bigger than a man's hand, was to swell and spread until it covered the whole firmament with portentous darkness.

But political stirrings and strivings had their counterparts in other directions. The upheavings of mind developed themselves in the more peaceful and beneficent forms of scientific discovery, and in adding to the resources of a nation's greatness and power. Mr. Clayton was entering on manhood when Watt, with indomitable perseverance, was perfecting his steam-engine, whose gigantic and widespread operations were to create a new era in the history of our world. Telford and Rennie—the former three years and the latter seven years Mr. Clayton's junior—and other embryo engineers of even greater fame, were gradually acquiring the skill and daring which were to exhibit themselves in elaborate schemes and operations, that were to astonish the world and revolutionize society; bridging gulfs, exalting valleys, and piercing hills; subduing the mighty forces of nature to the will of man; yoking the elements to his triumphal car, and making all subserve the advancement of the interests of the human race. Strange must have been the musings of the old man of eighty-nine, when he remembered through what wondrous transitions the world had passed, since he journeyed on foot from Lancashire to London, a truant from his home.

Mr. Clayton had reached his thirtieth year when the tidings of the first outbreak of the French Revolution reached these shores. At first, with many of the good men of that day, who loved liberty with a passionate ardour, he heard them with the hope that that was the dawn of a happier era, in the history of the peoples of Europe; a hope, however, that was soon doomed to a bitter disappointment, when they saw night settling down on the world rather than day rising; and the lurid flames of destruction spreading wider and further; and beheld men, with the stamp of humanity and God on their brows, transformed into demons, ready for any deed of darkness and blood. Nine years later he was to hear—with a chill of horror, that ran through all ranks and peoples—of a dethroned king, led pitilessly to the guillotine; and soon after the mother of his children, and the partner in his misfortunes, amid the frantic execrations of a misguided and infuriated rabble, dying the same dreadful death.

But amid all these startling occurrences,—and others, political, social, and religious, here and in other lands; in the progress of science, and the development of the before-hidden resources of the material world,—after a fashion, and to an extent, of which, if a century before there had been any prediction, it would have been regarded as the ravings of delirium, or the wild fancies of a fairy tale,—he saw the unveiling of the grand designs of Him who "is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

It was to be his privilege to witness the origination or the establishment of some of the great institutions, of a religious character, which have proved the glory and bulwark of our native land. This period opens up before us one of the brightest chapters in the history of this country; although, as yet, the chief chroniclers of her heroic deeds have scarcely discerned the moral grandeur and significance of the transactions wrought by men of whom the world was not worthy. Future historians will have to look for other causes of the true greatness of England than those which are supposed to reside in courts and camps, or to emanate from houses of legislation, or the great laboratories of art and science, commerce and literature. As from the upper room at

Jerusalem, which seemed beneath the notice and even the contempt of the heads of the Jewish nation, sprang the church of Christ, whose course has been that of a mighty stream of beneficent influences, designed to fertilize and bless all lands; so, from the unadorned walls of two or three quiet counting-houses, belonging to merchants of this great city, have originated those schemes of Christian enterprise which, aiming to distribute the Bible, or religious books, or send the living missionary to the distant heathen, have already effected the grandest results, in the transformation of whole communities of savages, or heathen idolaters possessing some of the refinements of life, into civilized and Christian men. "The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad for them; and the desert has rejoiced, and blossomed as the rose." "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river" (Psalms lxxx. 8–11).

To the chief incidents in the lives of Mr. Clayton and his three sons, who were for so many years consistent and effective workers in the vineyard of the Lord, the following pages are devoted.

Chapter II.

1754–1773.

BIRTHPLACE OF THE REV. JOHN CLAYTON.—EARLY EDUCATION.—ODIUM THEOLOGICUM.—APPRENTICESHIP.—ELOPEMENT FROM MANCHESTER TO LONDON.—DEATHBED SCENE.—REV. W. ROMAINE.—STRIKING CONVERSION.—DESIRE FOR THE MINISTRY.

MR. CLAYTON was the only son of George and Alice Clayton, and the youngest of ten children. His father (who was descended from an ancient family in Lancashire, by that branch of it, the head of which was Ralph Clayton, who died about the year 1662, and whose posterity merged into the line of the Claytons of Adlington, Lancaster) occupied an ancient residence, built entirely of stone, now known by the name of Wood End Farm. The edifice bears evidence of its extreme antiquity, and of the use for which it was originally designed. The massive walls, the spacious hall, the narrow lights, and the precipitous staircase, denote its monastic derivation. There is a legend current in the township that, some centuries ago, this religious house was profaned by the barbarous murder of a priest, who sought shelter therein; and who, having treasure about him, was put to death in an upper chamber, which is still shown as the scene of this dark deed. It is not to be wondered at that, in an age of superstition, the house was said to be haunted from that time forth, to the no small dismay of the neighbourhood, and more especially of the tenants of the dwelling. It stands on an eminence, gently sloping towards a stream which winds through the valley beneath. It is abundantly supplied with the purest water, from a living spring, which, flowing from the house along the adjoining meadows, led probably to the appropriation of them as bleaching grounds. Such they were when held by George Clayton, who followed the vocation of a bleacher of cotton and calicoes. There it was that the Reverend John Clayton was born on the 5th of October, 1754.

As the only son in their numerous family, it may be supposed that the boy became the object of the tenderest love of his parents, and especially his mother, of whom he always spoke with great reverence and affection; describing her as a woman devoted in an eminent degree to household duties; of a mild and gentle bearing, and not without certain traces of piety, according to the light she possessed, and the means of instruction she enjoyed, which, alas, in those parts and at that time of day, were very poorly and inadequately furnished. There is little doubt that this son was a spoilt child, caressed with an over-indulgent fondness, and unchecked in the wilful and wayward follies of thoughtless boyhood. He was the pet of his sisters, some of whom were from fifteen to twenty years his seniors, although the majority of them were cut off in their early youth. Three of them only are known to have survived, and settled in families. The second, Alice, was united to Mr. Baker, a surgeon and apothecary in London. She lost her husband in early life, and afterwards married the Rev. Anthony Crole, one of the *elevés* of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, at her College of Trevecca, in Wales, and afterwards for many years the honoured, successful, and beloved pastor of the church formerly assembling at Pinners' Hall, and afterwards at Founders' Hall, Lothbury, in London. He lived to a good old age, and was blest with a family of seventeen children, in addition to the two step-daughters, the Misses Baker, who were of so tender an age when their mother became Mrs. Crole, that they never knew any father but him. She was the survivor, for several years, after his removal to a better world, and at length departed in the faith and hope of the Gospel, at the house of her eldest daughter, who had married, long before that event, the Rev. W. Craven, the much-respected pastor of the Congregational church at Melbourne, in Cambridgeshire.

As soon as John Clayton was of an age to be sent to commence his studies, he was entered as a scholar at the Leyland Grammar School, an ancient foundation, at that time held in considerable respect for classical learning. Beyond the ordinary routine of instruction, and an attendance, not very regular, at church, he was altogether destitute of *religious* education. The books for children, now so numerous, and so excellently adapted to attract and impress the infant and the youthful mind, were, in that age and in that part of the kingdom, entirely unknown. From his mother he gained some notions of things moral and divine, but her own stock of knowledge at that period was of the most scanty and imperfect kind. There were, nevertheless, particular seasons, even then, in which he was no stranger to certain "compunctious visitings of conscience," and of some undefined aspirations after immortality. He has been heard to say, that he well remembered, when at a very tender age he sat in his mother's rocking-chair, for hours together meditating on eternity, and was even absorbed in the contemplation of the overwhelming theme; feeling, as it were, in the darkness, if haply he might find some resting-place for his disquieted spirit. These thoughts, however, were rare and transient, leaving no permanent impression, and were productive of no practical results. Whether they may not be considered to have been among those "preparations of the heart" which "are from the Lord," is a question which the reader must determine for himself, in reflecting upon the future character of the man, and the great purpose to which his life was consecrated.

He was, in these boyish days, a staunch Protestant, and brought up with an irreconcilable and almost instinctive hatred of Popery. His childhood dates at a time not very remote from the great rebellion in favour of the Pretender, in 1745, and this may serve to account for the antipathy subsisting among his schoolfellows, composed, in almost equal numbers, of Roman Catholics and Protestants. Mutual reproaches and irritating scorn often led to pitched battles amongst the boys, who, without knowing much, if anything at all, of the grounds of their respective opinions, learned to hurl defiance at each other, and to manifest no small degree of animosity, in indulging their warlike propensities. John Clayton, from his tall stature and natural courage, became a leader in these pugnacious exploits, and often gave and received some hard blows in the cause of the Protestants. The war songs were couched in no very complimentary language, and were uttered in tones of studied insult. Of course, in these affrays no moral victory was ever achieved, but, on the contrary, much ill-will generated, while each party adhered to its own predilections.

These deep-rooted prejudices, however, became in process of time, by reading and reflection, deep-rooted principles; issuing in a determined hatred of Popery, and all its deadly operations and influence; and an attachment as strong to the rights of private judgment, liberty of conscience, and loyalty to the House of Hanover and the Protestant succession.

The time at length came when he was to receive the rite of confirmation, as appointed by the Anglican Church. All that was required to this end was an ability to repeat the catechism, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments; in which, having acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the parochial clergymen, he was presented to the bishop, for the sanction and benediction which encouraged him to believe that he was now, and for ever after, to all intents a Christian. An incident occurred at this administration, of which he sometimes made mention. As he passed with a crowd of young persons to the communion table, which for convenience sake was enclosed by a railing, the clerk or sexton let fall the movable rail upon his head, inflicting a severe wound, from which the blood flowed copiously, and which, though unattended by any serious consequences, left a scar which he bore to the end of his days. Oftentimes has he referred to his confirmation with humiliation and regret, fully assured that he was confirmed when in a state of gross spiritual ignorance, unbelief, and sinfulness.

Shortly after this he was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Mr. Boultbee, at Manchester, and thus acquired an acquaintance with practical chemistry. The time he spent in the laboratory was not lost. There, and in the dispensing of medicines at the counter, he became familiar with the quality of drugs, and their application to the numerous diseases of the human body, the knowledge of which he found to be of essential service to him in future life, in treating his own ailments and those of his family; while amongst his numerous acquaintance and friends he was prepared, in ordinary cases, to suggest useful advice and to recommend appropriate remedies. To every minister of the Gospel, and especially to the missionary, such an acquaintance with the healing art is invaluable; for while he will shun everything like quackery, or encroachment upon the office of the regular practitioner, he will be qualified, especially in cases of sudden emergency, to suggest the best methods to be pursued with a patient, so as to stay the progress of disease, or afford suitable relief.

Here he continued for four years; when, before the expiration of his term of service, he suddenly decamped, without assigning a reason for so doing, or in fact giving any notice of his intentions. He made his way to London, with only a slender wardrobe, and a fowling-piece, which it is conjectured he borrowed of a neighbour, with the full purpose at the time of returning it to its owner; but as this long journey was mainly accomplished on foot, his resources failed him on the road, and he sold the gun as a measure of dire necessity, to enable him to go forward towards the place of his destination. How this matter was arranged with the proprietor is unknown; but it is in no wise uncertain that John Clayton, in after days, adverted to the fact with deep compunction and penitential shame; observing that his case bore some analogy to that of Onesimus, for whom Paul so pathetically pleaded with Philemon. What were the particular motives which led to this irregular and censurable movement are not known; but it offers a solemn warning to youths in similar circumstances, to beware of listening to the voice of temptation, and to avoid discontent, insubordination, weariness of duty in their place and station, and the love of change, which have been fatal to many in the condition of servitude, and in the outset of life. It cost, in the remembrances of the subject of this memoir, many a bitter tear and many a regretful sigh, that he should have so early turned aside from the path of rectitude and peace. But He who maketh the wrath and folly of man to praise Him, overruled this clandestine visit to the everlasting good of the wanderer.

Having reached the house of his sister in London, he was received with much surprise and with gentle remonstrances, but withal was treated with much kindness.

A short time before this unexpected visit, Mr. Baker, his brother-in-law, as has been intimated, died, after a brief illness, in his youthful prime. While on his deathbed, it was considered proper that he should see a clergyman; but for whom to send, was the question. Mrs. Baker had occasionally heard the Rev. William Romaine, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, and it was suggested that he should be invited to visit the sufferer. The summons was obeyed without delay; and the venerable minister, having placed himself by the couch of the patient, adopted a style of address not very usual on such occasions. Taking him kindly by the hand, he spoke to the following effect:—"You are, sir, a perfect stranger to me, and I to you. I ask not what may have been your former character, or your habits and course of life. I know all about it. I know that you, like myself, are a sinner against God; that you were born under His wrath and curse, and have gone astray like a lost sheep, having transgressed that law which is holy, just, and good, in thought, word, and deed; and that you have no power in and of yourself to effect your deliverance from this state of condemnation and misery.

Nevertheless be not discouraged. I bring you good news, glad tidings of great joy. The God whom you have offended is full of mercy and compassion. He willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should repent and live. He has provided for your escape by the gift, mission, meritorious obedience, and atoning sacrifice of His incarnate Son. The work which He undertook He has gloriously finished; and His righteousness, freely imputed to the penitent and believing sinner, will infallibly justify from all charges and liability to condemnation. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; and him that cometh, you have His own word, He will not cast out. He is willing at this very moment to save you; only believe. Look unto Him and be saved." Then, with much affection and earnestness, he still further addressed himself to the dying man, saying:—"Sir, this is my message; were I to remain with you till midnight, I have nothing more to tell you. Can you receive it? I again ask, Can you receive it? Look and Live." Having offered prayer, he took his departure, pronouncing a cordial farewell. Death soon fulfilled his commission, and Mr. Baker never again beheld the face or heard the voice of his clerical instructor. His first and last visit was consoling as well as awakening, and it is hoped produced a beneficial impression on the mind of him who was so soon to enter an eternal world.

It is, however, certain that great moral results to others followed this interview. The mourning widow, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, then received the Divine testimony, and "embraced, and ever after held fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is needless to add that she now resorted regularly to St. Ann's, Blackfriars, and sought for further instruction and consolation from the lips of the evangelist who had preached the Gospel to her dying husband. As her light increased her peace and joy abounded, and she "rejoiced in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh."

It was natural that, having learned the value of her own soul, she should feel anxious for the salvation of others. As soon, therefore, as her young brother, in his flight from Manchester, sought refuge in her house, her first desire was to prevail with him to accompany her to hear the preaching of Mr. Romaine. This he did; and, wonderful to relate, the first sermon he heard—and it was the very first in the course of his life to which he had listened, that set forth the fulness of reconciling grace through the righteousness of the everlasting Son of the Father—was made the power of God to his salvation. He described the work as almost instantaneous, and could compare it to nothing but a flash of lightning, which discovered to him, as in a moment of time, the only method of reconciliation, the only ground of hope for ruined man. He now perceived that there was no way of deliverance from the curse of a violated law, and the condemnation of hell, but in believing the record which God has given of His Son; and from that hour he became a new creature, casting away and trampling under his feet all self-righteous pretensions; while he made it his prayer, ere he left the church, and reiterated it ever afterwards, to the end of his protracted life, "that he might win Christ and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith."

After this first sermon by Mr. Romaine, which was so signally blessed to the youthful wanderer, he continued to hear, as often as he was able, that venerable preacher, whom he always revered and loved as his spiritual father. From his lips he learned other lessons beside those which referred to the utter incapacity of man, as a sinner, to work out for himself a justifying righteousness. He was led to see that fallen man is, of himself, as destitute of power as of righteousness; that all his efforts towards reformation and amendment of life are insufficient, without Divine aid and succour; and that nothing short of a regenerating influence from the quickening Spirit can avail to mortify sin, and insure the fruits of holiness. He likewise heard much of the duty, privilege, and efficacy of prayer, as the means of obtaining spiritual good and spiritual growth. He learned, moreover, that a life of communion with the Triune Jehovah is the only life worth living; and in a word was taught to live the "life of faith" and walk the "walk of faith" in hope of enjoying the triumph of faith.

The current of his thoughts and the bent of his desires were now totally changed; and he longed to become the instrument of announcing to others the wondrous discovery of God's mercy which had been made to him, and by virtue of which he had passed from death unto life. The love of Christ constrained him; and he thought of nothing in future but of consecrating himself to the work of the Christian ministry.

Chapter III.

1773–1777.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.—ENTRANCE ON TREVECCA COLLEGE.—LETTER FROM THE COUNTESS.—PERSECUTION.—INTERESTING INCIDENT.—SECOND LETTER FROM THE COUNTESS.—DELIVERANCES FROM PERIL.—ABSTEMIOUSNESS.—RIDE TO LONDON.—ILL HEALTH.—TUNBRIDGE WELLS.—FOUR LETTERS FROM THE COUNTESS.—CONVERSION AT NORWICH.—SEVENTH LETTER.

While God was thus impressing the heart of the youthful convert, the great and good Countess of Huntingdon heard some of these interesting particulars concerning him, and desired an interview. He was but too happy to avail himself of the privilege, and met her ladyship's invitation with rejoicing readiness. It is well known that she was a person of great sagacity and penetration. On seeing him she was at once greatly prepossessed in his favour, by his pleasing and intelligent countenance, his commanding presence, and his elegant manners. Her conversation with him led her to the conclusion that the brokenness of spirit and self-renouncing humility she thought she perceived in him, connected with the decided tone of his evangelical sentiments, and his earnest but chastened zeal in his great Master's service,—accompanied also with much undissembled diffidence of his own competence for so great a work as that of the ministry of the Gospel,—were signs of a gracious spirit, taught and led by God; and induced her at once to take him under her patronage, and to offer him an appropriate education at her college in Wales, then under the direction of a pious and learned clergyman of the Church of England. She believed him to have the gifts and the grace requisite for the sacred vocation; and forthwith engaged to maintain him, entirely at her own cost, in his preparatory studies, and the early exercise of his preaching talent. With fear and trembling he accepted her ladyship's generous proposals, and, animated by her exhortations and encouragement, soon found himself among her students at her seminary of Trevecca.

Lady Huntingdon's plan was to furnish her students with all things necessary for their personal comfort and respectable appearance as ministers. Her provision extended to lodging, diet, clothing, a horse for their journeys, with a gown, cassock, and bands, and a small sum of money for the pocket. Mr. Clayton retained to his old age a pocket-handkerchief, marked at the corners with the words "Trevecca College," and the initials of the student to whom it belonged; so minutely did the countess condescend to the details of personal convenience, in favour of those under her care, that they might have lack of nothing.

Mr. Clayton had not been long at Trevecca before he sensibly felt his deficiency for the task which, in the ardour of youthful zeal, he had undertaken. He became much depressed in spirit, and but for the kindness of his patroness, in combating his apprehensions, and consoling him under his misgivings, he might, at this crisis, have abandoned altogether the service upon which his heart was, notwithstanding, intensely set. In his very earliest ministrations he was the subject of such nervous excitement and apprehension, that on more than one occasion he stopped in the midst of his discourse, burst into tears, and abruptly closed the service. In this he was by no means singular; as the same thing is stated of some who afterwards, like himself, became most eminent as public speakers. By degrees he gained confidence, and speedily acquired that self-possession which is of such essential importance to effective oratory. His occasional preachings proved so generally acceptable, that he was, as he thought, sent forth on itinerating missions much too frequently, to the constant interruption of his academical studies; and herein he ventured to differ in opinion from her ladyship, who held a supreme direction in the affairs of the college, and therefore claimed implicit obedience.

In the weekly services upon which he was sent, his knowledge of the horse, and its fitting treatment, proved of great advantage; while his expert horsemanship enabled him to accomplish long journeys, in a rough country, with greater facility and less fatigue than fell to the lot of his fellow-students. On the Saturday, and sometimes on the Friday, in every week, he set forth on these itinerating excursions, and was strictly enjoined to return to the college on Monday. This injunction was scrupulously obeyed; for her ladyship was a stern disciplinarian, in the government of her students—as they all found—in the domestic as well as the scholastic arrangements of the college. They rose at five o'clock, and were expected to appear in the hall for divine worship punctually at six; at which hour the prayer-bell rang, and she herself was always present. She cast a searching glance around her, to satisfy herself that none appeared in negligent attire, or betrayed an inattention to the requirements of cleanliness and neatness, on which she was wont to lay great stress.

The earliest-dated letter extant, from the countess to Mr. Clayton, was written some time after he had become one of her students, and was addressed to him during an itinerating excursion in Cornwall. As everything, in connexion with one who occupied so prominent a position in the religious movements of the latter part of the last century, has an interest attaching to it, even with the present generation, her correspondence with Mr. Clayton is given. The letter above-mentioned is as follows :—

"DEAR CLAYTON,—I have your letter; it gave me much pleasure in finding your days are employed for so dear and faithful a Master as we serve upon earth. May zeal, faithfulness, and love cause each moment to be engaged for Him and with Him. He pays good wages, and often the best wages, when He shows us we can do nothing without Him, and by which He best proves how much we may and can do with Him. Mr. Sampson has wrote to beg a supply for his meeting, during his absence. As I don't know the state of that place, I am at a loss to answer properly for you; but in my letter to him I shall refer it to you, as consistent, with any other engagements you may see yourself obliged to observe, with my willingness to have you serve him. Great, very great, increase everywhere of work! Such a Gospel day have we not known. May our hearts live near the Lord, and in true poverty of spirit evermore be at His feet, waiting His gracious smiles and directions. All is well at college. The Lord Jesus is with them. Could your clothes do tolerably, till this very bad weather is a little over, it would be well. I know you are so clean and careful. I can never wish you to have less; but new clothes to ride in must so soon be spoiled at this season, that I will leave it with you to judge; and when you see fit, order them, and send me the bill. I hope to be at Bath next week. I am so hurried I have not a moment to spare, but to assure you I ever am,

"Your faithful and affectionate friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"LONDON, *December 1st*, 1774."

It often happened that Mr. Clayton endured much persecuting violence, and coarse ill usage, in his early ministrations. His voice, always sonorous and full of agreeable intonation, was sometimes drowned in the clamour of vulgar hootings and vociferous abuse; while he was not unfrequently pelted with rotten eggs, with stones, brickbats, and other offensive missiles. A remarkable instance of this kind occurred in the town of Christchurch, Hants. He was preaching in the market-place, where he was surrounded by a large concourse of people, some mocking, and others bent on more serious and mischievous interruption. Among these was a young man named Mitchell, a farmer's son, who had spent the morning of the day in gathering a large number of addled eggs, from the farmhouses in the neighbourhood, which he brought to the town in a hamper. While the sermon was proceeding the hamper was opened; a signal was given to his comrades, and the pelting began, till the young minister's face, apparel, and preaching robes were completely bespattered, and became as yellow as gold. He mildly expostulated with the assailants, and closed his discourse with the prayer —"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Mr. Mitchell afterwards went to India, made his fortune, and returned to England "to die in his nest." In India he heard and received the life-giving truths of the Gospel, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Among other remorseful reminiscences of bygone years was the disgraceful scene at Christchurch, which must have been enacted somewhere about the year 1776. It happened that, as long after as 1812, Mr. Clayton's second son was supplying, for a few weeks, the pulpit of the countess's chapel at Cheltenham. After one of the services, there walked into the vestry an elderly gentleman, of a benignant aspect, who having introduced himself as Mr. Mitchell, of Reading, inquired earnestly of the preacher if his father was yet living; because he had, he said, especial reasons for wishing to see him, and ask pardon of him before he (Mr. Mitchell) should close his eyes in death. "For I," added he, "was the ringleader of a number of ignorant and foolish youths who pelted and insulted your father in the market-place at Christchurch, when beseeching sinners, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled unto God; but I have obtained mercy; and I long for an opportunity before I die"—and as he spoke the big tears rolled down his cheek—"to make my confession and apology to one whom I so evilly entreated, in the days of ignorance and unbelief." The desired interview was brought about; and the meeting of the two men, under the circumstances already detailed, may be easily conceived as most affecting. They have now met in heaven, to join in the new song—"To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; to Him be glory and dominion for ever."

The following letter from his patroness, bearing date February 19th, 1775, was sent to him while in Cornwall:—

"Dear Clayton,—Agreeable to your wishes I send you a release. This should have been sooner done, but being most dangerously ill I left all business for a season. I think you should introduce Gibbons into Cornwall, and leave him your gown, and I will have one made at Bath to fit you, when you come through here, that you may have with you at the college. The work of the Lord is prosperous everywhere, and, by new students being sent me, promises still more to be so. I am glad to release you, as it is your wish; and abundantly so, as I hope Gibbons will be able, with your approbation, to succeed you. The summer must have good help for Cornwall. I trust you will have much comfort by hearing of the fruit of your faithful labours. May the Lord bless your gracious soul with the abundant increase of Gospel faith and love, and make you daily feel the glory and happiness of an unreserved heart for His service. It is the only true joy of a simple heart to become wholly His. I hope to see you so soon, that I can only beg your prayers; believe me, you have ever mine.

"I am your ever faithful and affectionate friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON."

Mr. Clayton's growing power and acceptance, as a preacher, led to still multiplied engagements, in some of which he had to record signal escapes from imminent dangers, in travelling the wild and mountainous districts, whither he carried the message of reconciling mercy. Returning homewards, on one occasion, he was benighted, and neither moon nor stars appeared. His steed made a sudden halt, and continued immovable, notwithstanding the various expedients, resorted to by the rider, to urge him forward. After waiting for some time, the moon appeared in her brightness, and discovered that he was on the brink of a rocky precipice, from which, had he and the animal fallen, they must, in all probability, have been dashed to pieces. The good providence of God preserved them both, by means of the instinct and sagacity of the horse.

On another occasion, when preaching in the open air, and surrounded by a ferocious band, intent on mischief, there stood forth a man, remarkable for his stature and athletic power, who was to make the signal for the commencement of the assault; but this very man was so touched by the youthful aspect of the preacher, his entire composure, and earnest expostulations, that he exclaimed with a stentorian voice, while he clenched his fist in defiance, "The first man that throws a stone, or an egg, or any other thing at this young parson, I'll throw my fist in his face;" and having made this menace he stood like a sentinel, with his fist doubled, and in mute attention, till the service peacefully closed, and the throng as peaceably dispersed.

Indiscreet kindness is sometimes as injurious as boisterous rudeness, of which take the following example. At one of the hospitable farmhouses in Wales,—and at that time there were comparatively few that afforded an asylum to the persecuted itinerant,—after twice preaching, followed by a long ride, Mr. Clayton was courteously entertained. The good lady of the house, full of generous feeling, prepared for him, as he was retiring to rest, a tumbler of brandy and water, made "very stiff." He tasted it, and exclaimed, "I would not drink it for all the world; it would derange my head, and dishonour my ministry." "Pshaw!" she replied, "what does it signify? as you are so soon going to bed." Upon which the young preacher ventured to admonish her, that the sinfulness of excess is the same in the sight of God, under all circumstances; and that Christians are bound to avoid the appearance of evil, and to make their moderation known unto all men, because the Lord is at hand. Through the protracted life with which it pleased God to favour Mr. Clayton, he was distinguished by a temperance, leaning to the side of abstinence. On ordinary occasions he was accustomed to restrict himself to two glasses of wine per diem; in company he might perhaps take a third glass,—but a fourth never; and mixed liquor, except when used for medicinal purposes, he held in utter abhorrence. He would say, jocularly, that he took of wine two glasses for himself, a third for his friends, and if he were to take a fourth, it could only be for his enemies.

The usefulness of his ministrations, the politeness of his manners, and the correctness of his habits, made him a great favourite with his venerable patroness, and led her to regard him in the light of a friend and a confidant. On a particular occasion, rather inconsiderately, as she afterwards thought, she issued her orders to commence the building of a large chapel, in the environs of the metropolis. She was anxious to countermand the directions she had given; but how to do this in time to stay proceedings was the difficulty; the post was tardy, and not very regular in its delivery; the time of railroads and electric wires had not yet come. She sent for Mr. Clayton, and inquired if he thought he could ride post from the Principality to London, on business of great emergency, without injury to himself. He replied, that on her ladyship's business, and under the protection and blessing of God, he would willingly make the attempt. She then directed him where to go in London, imparted very fully her reasons and motives for recalling her previous commands, gave him ample instructions as her plenipotentiary, and bade him "God speed." Fully to estimate the arduousness of the undertaking, it must be remembered that travelling, at the time referred to, was a thing materially different from what it has since become. The roads were rough and devious, the accommodation at inns imperfect, and the dangers manifold and great. The young minister, however, set forth undaunted, and taking a fresh horse at the end of each stage, pressed forward, with little rest and scarcely a regular meal, till he reached the place of destination, just in time to prevent the signing of the contract for the building. Towards the close of the journey, between Northampton and St. Albans, he was, in consequence of this unusual effort, seized with violent bleeding from the nose, which he apprehended would delay his arrival in town, and possibly defeat the design of the mission. But here his medical knowledge assisted him; and having bathed his forehead and face in the coldest water he could procure, he supplied himself at a chemist's shop with some lint, and made pledgets of that material, wherewith he plugged the nostrils, stayed the bleeding, and proceeded on his way. The journey was, otherwise, accomplished safely, with no material inconvenience to the rider, and with a speed almost incredible. Having successfully completed the business intrusted to him, he returned, as he came, to Trevecca, though not with equal celerity, to receive the acknowledgments of his noble patroness.

About this time Mr. Clayton's health became delicate, and he betrayed symptoms, as it seemed, of pulmonary disease, which naturally awakened in her ladyship's benevolent heart much solicitude on his behalf. With a view to his benefit she sent him to supply her chapel at Tunbridge Wells, where he took the duty alternately with the late Rev. Dr. Haweis, rector of Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, and one of her ladyship's chaplains. Here Mr. Clayton recovered his strength, and proclaimed the Gospel of the grace of God with great power and general acceptance. Not a few listened to his message to their conviction, conversion, and edification; and the preacher became in an eminent degree what is termed "popular." After leaving Tunbridge Wells he came to preach in London, and was followed by admiring crowds to the Tabernacle in Moorfields, Spafields chapel, Zion chapel, the Mulberry Gardens, and Tottenham Court Road chapel.

The following letters of the countess were sent to him, the first during one of his absences from London preaching in the provinces, and the others on his return to the Mulberry Gardens.

"DEAR CLAYTON,—Hoping to find you at Lincoln, I write to desire you would as soon as possible go to London. Your abode is prepared at the Mulberry Gardens walk, and for all your wants. The Lord's hand has been most graciously manifested by His strength and power there. The people—a most precious people—will expect you with impatience. You know how to guard against such as you have had difficulties at Norwich with. Let love and patience deal with dissenters, but let us guard against becoming the dupes of any party. Love all in their own way, but Jesus Christ above all other ways.—I am, dear Clayton, entreating your being in London, in very great haste, but ever your faithful and truly affectionate friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"COLLEGE, *February 9th*, 1777."

"COLLEGE, *April 1st*, 1777.

"DEAR CLAYTON,—The enclosed I thought would revive and comfort all your hearts. Don't fail to read it on Sunday, and after leave it with either Mr. Simpson or Mr. Leggat. There is something of the right sort arising here, and most exceeding promising cause for my heart to triumph in the mercies vouchsafed to our poor labours. O pray and rejoice. Nothing but the hope that these accounts would revive our dear friends at the Mulberry Gardens could make me write. Satan is angry, but the Lord smiles; and who then can fear? A single eye or an honest heart for Him shall carry all before it, in spite of men and devils. Read it heartily. Pray fervently for more blessing, and our cup shall overflow. O for more, more *faith*, and then let the devil and world do what they will. Our lively young men have had a precious feast to-day. We all love and pray for you. Love to your dear sister, dear Crole, and all our friends at the Gardens.

"I am, ever faithfully and affectionately your friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"A fall, coming out of chapel, has affected me much. The devil had a hard blow, but wonderful mercy, only, saved my life: but though his head is bruised, yet he does wound our heels; this I found true."

"DEAR CLAYTON,—Your letter of this morning has made me most uneasy, on account of your health. While Mr. Shirley stays at Norwich send and order Wills to the Mulberry Gardens, and do you come to Wales, for the goat's milk, or Bristol waters; and till then change with Dunn, for Woolwich. I wish you could find out for me Matthew Wilks, that I might write to him. I hear he is coming to Haverford West, to preach; this he will grieve me by to the highest degree, and oblige me to disown him; as he must then stand against the college and association, and that in most wicked defiance, which, if he knew fully, as an honest man, he would suffer death rather than do. Was I sure where to find him, I would write to him in much love and kindliness, to avoid distressing me in the way he must do, and oblige me in honour for ever to disown him. Should he take that step, a more dishonest foundation never was laid, and God will never own it. Let me know where he is, that I may write; and if you can see him, beg him not to go till he has heard from me. Fear not, the matters at the Mulberry Gardens shall go well, though through the fire. All that's kind to dear sister and Crole, and believe me, as ever,

"Your own affectionate and faithful friend, in haste,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"COLLEGE, *April 4th*, 1777.

"Dear Mr. Jones, of Langan, has preached to-day, and has given us all a high feast. The Lord give such a spirit to all His ambassadors."

The round of public services in London soon brought on a recurrence of the symptoms already noticed, and gave fresh cause of alarm to her ladyship, who forthwith commended Mr. Clayton to her family physician in town, and sought his advice.

The two following letters addressed to Mr. Crole and Dr. Fothergill, so characteristic of the lady who wrote them, and as both indicating her high regard for

Mr. Clayton, and her minute attention to the comfort and health of her students, are given:—

"Dear Crole,—Clayton's letter, relative to his state of health, has given me great uneasiness. I have been praying, with a heartfelt distress about him, to the Lord, and the best human means of all kinds I am resolved he must pursue; and I rely upon you that no time may be lost in his going with the enclosed to Dr. Fothergill. Let him send the letter up, and wait for his appointment to see him. I have told the doctor that my express orders to him are immediately to follow his directions, if to the Hot Wells, or to Wales for the goat's milk, air, and quiet; with an exact observation of the doctor's prescriptions. I am sure his kindness to me will make him do all for poor dear Clayton in his power. I rely on *your* seeing him most exactly observing the doctor's orders, without delay;—he is so thin and tender, that time lost is of the utmost importance to his health and life. He will press the doctor to take a guinea. At nine, or rather before, every morning, he may have a chance of seeing him; otherwise to attend to the doctor's appointments exactly. Time obliges me to add only my love to your wife, and all that's kind to Clayton; insisting upon no trifling with his complaints, and I now remain,

"Your truly faithful and affectionate friend,

"S. Huntingdon.

"College, *April 6th*, 1777."

"College, South Wales, *April 6th*, 1777.

"My worthy Friend,—My high opinion and just degree of confidence engage my request for your advice and instruction to the bearer of this, Mr. Clayton, who is a student of mine, and whose health is of much importance, for the best services. He is truly an uncommon instance of grace,—not now but two and twenty,—and has been a most useful instrument in the church of Christ. The great and just regard all that know him have for him renders this request from myself and others but the best excuse for this particular trouble. He has my express orders to immediately pursue whatever method you should advise, whether to the Hot Wells, or directly to Wales for the goat's milk, quiet, and air, with those prescriptions you should appoint;

which may the Divine blessing abundantly attend. With my keeping warm this winter, and attending to your directions, I have reason to be thankful that this last year in Wales has been spent in much more of the comforts of health than I could have expected; and being ever under the truest sense of my obligations to you, I must ever remain, my worthy friend,

"Your ever obliged and sincere friend,
"To Dr. Fothergill." "S. Huntingdon.

Country air and horse exercise having been recommended, Mr. Clayton was appointed to the chapel at Norwich, where he continued for a while preaching the word and itinerating in the neighbourhood. Here his ministrations were remarkably blessed. One instance is on record of a conversion effected through his instrumentality, which, both directly and indirectly, was attended with results of the highest importance. In this cathedral city there lived, at the time of Mr. Clayton's visit, a person of the name of Johnson, of whom, in a letter sent to Mr. George Clayton, the Rev. W. Roaf, of Wigan, thus writes:—"He was a Pharisee. The descriptions he gave of his pharisaical spirit were really ludicrous. He limited himself to a certain number of words per diem. He fully believed God would some day signalize him by some miraculous interposition, and point him out as the pattern for all beings to imitate. He went to hear Mr. Clayton in Norwich. The subject was the two builders. God blessed the word. On his going home, he loathed himself. He actually gave a dog the footpath, thinking it a less odious creature than he felt himself to be. This person, after being, *I believe*, at Trevecca college, settled at Wigan. My chapel was built for him. There he instrumentally converted Mr. Roby, who succeeded him here a short time, and then went to Manchester.

Mr. Roby improved his death from the words 'My father, my father!' His emotions were very deep, and many of the people said, 'I may exclaim, My grandfather!' &c. Who can tell the results which have issued from that one sermon preached by Mr. Clayton, at Norwich?"*

Having in a good measure recovered his health, Mr. Clayton continued to preach in various parts of the kingdom, under the immediate direction of Lady Huntingdon; and everywhere, through the Divine blessing, with no ordinary degree of acceptance and usefulness. Among other places he visited Tunbridge Wells, where his labours were highly appreciated, and whither, on the occasion of an attack of illness, she resolved to send him again. Her wishes were communicated to him in the following letter:—

"Dear Clayton,—The state of your health, and the repeated calls for you at Tunbridge Wells, make me hope that the change there might, from the air, and Mrs. Marsden's care of you, with little preaching, be the only thing that may prevent your growing worse, by the extreme heat of the Mulberry Gardens. I have had such difficulties about your leaving that place, with the remark lest your health should suffer more by your staying, that I have wrote to John Jones, at Norwich, to come up (I do believe he is faithful to our work) and be instructed by you before you leave it; apprising him clearly of the various enemies to that work on all sides we have. With his judgment and faithfulness, I trust the Lord might bless him among the people. I have ordered him to write to you; but prevent him by a line if you should not approve him for the Mulberry Gardens; but I cannot find another, besides yourself, I could alike rely on. When he comes to town, or the day you can fix to be at Tunbridge Wells, write to Mr. Marsden, after consulting Mr. Coughland, to give out your being there, as they are all so very anxious about it, and I shall never be forgiven if you don't go. Collingham shall succeed you there, when you come off for the college, and he may easily change with Jones, as Whitefoot is in Sussex. —— is just arrived out of Lincolnshire. Do hurry Hall down if he is not gone; and on William's return (which will be soon) he shall go there also, and if Wilks wants help, Tyler or Thomas Jones may go, and I think Moody to Harwich, and some one sent to Maidstone or to Dover, or Kinfer to Maidstone, and some one to Dover. You cannot conceive the grief P——, by his evil actions, has occasioned me —tore all the Worcester society to pieces, and divided it for himself; *but this to yourself only*. I trust the Lord will increase my faith and patience, and by this, His dear yoke will be easy and His burden become light. Hint to J. Jones his keeping clear of the T——cle, till things are better than at present. All your friends here ever are full of love for you. In great haste, and much fatigued with writing, I must conclude,

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* In the *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. 2, p. 347, Mr. Johnson is represented as having been minister of St. George's, Manchester. This must have been previous to his settling at Wigan.

"Your ever faithful and affectionate friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"COLLEGE, *April 22nd*, 1777.

"You were much blest at the Wells, I find. May the Lord more and more bless your honest soul, and crown your faithful labours with success."

Chapter IV.

1777.

CONFORMITY AND NONCONFORMITY.—SEEKS EPISCOPAL ORDINATION.—EXTRACTS FROM MR. BOURNE'S DIARY OF 1777.—TOWGOOD ON DISSENT.—MR. CLAYTON BECOMES A NONCONFORMIST.—THE COUNTESS'S DISPLEASURE.—LETTER FROM HER.

We now come to a most important period in Mr. Clayton's history, when a crisis of great moment arrived, and his ecclesiastical relationships and movements were to undergo an entire change. It was the earnest wish of the countess that Mr. Clayton should take orders in the Church of England, and with this object she had procured the necessary testimonials, and despatched him with her own warm recommendations to the Bishop of Lincoln, from whose hands he was to receive ordination.

At this point in Mr. G. Clayton's memoirs of his father I break off, for the purpose of introducing the following extracts from the "Diary of Henry Bourne, of Dalby, Lincolnshire," which were obligingly sent me by his daughter, Mrs. Allenby, senior, of Louth.

"*April 24th,* 1777.—This day brought a letter from Mr. Waltham, informing us that he found so many obstacles in his way towards obtaining orders for the curacy of Dalby, that he had laid aside all thoughts of proceeding; and we likewise received a letter by the same post from Mr. Glascott, informing us that, as Mr. Waltham had desisted from his intentions, he had written to Mr. Clayton, who is a student in Lady Huntingdon's college, and wanted much to make his way into the Church of England, if he could get his credentials signed; and Mr. Glascott engaged to inform us.

"*May 9th.*—Received another letter from Mr. Glascott, to inform us that Mr. Clayton had got testimonials signed, and that they were sent to be countersigned by the Bishop of Landaff, and that he expected Mr. Clayton in a few days, at Gainsborough, to which place he had requested the bishop to forward the testimonials. The business is now to all appearance in some forwardness. There are indeed two bishops between Mr. Clayton and us; yet if God be for us, and if He has work for this man to do amongst us, we know He is able to remove every obstacle. We desire not to be looking to man for the accomplishing this important affair, but to God alone.

"*May 11th.*—This day brought another letter from Mr. Glascott, respecting Mr. Clayton. The clouds, we hope, are dispersing apace: for we received enclosed Mr. Clayton's testimonials, signed by the Bishop of Landaff, informing us likewise that Mr. Clayton would be with us in a few days, to get his title from Mr. Rickett, and then proceed to the Bishop of Lincoln; but as the paper ought to be with the bishop three weeks before the ordination, a difficulty seemed to arise in respect to that. As to-morrow it will only be three weeks to Trinity Sunday, I waited immediately upon Mr. Rickett, got him to write a letter, with the testimonials, to the bishop, which we purposed to send by the post this evening; but when I returned home I found my brother had a man prepared to set off with it express to Bugden, which he did this afternoon; so we hope there will be no objection. I am much rejoiced by the seeming prospect. Hitherto the Lord has helped us, and trust He will continue to do so till He shall accomplish His own will in us and by us.

"*May 13th.*—The man who carried Mr. Clayton's testimonials to the Bishop of Lincoln returned (having delivered the letter into his own hand), with a letter from the bishop, in which he informed my brother that he had received the testimonials and title, but must be excused admitting Mr. Clayton as a candidate for orders, till he should have made further inquiries about his character, conduct, and education; of which he had some suspicions, as his friend the Bishop of Landaff had subscribed his testimonials in such general terms. Here we seem to meet with a fresh hindrance; we fear the inquiry will not turn out to our advantage, as the Countess of Huntingdon's people are peculiarly obnoxious to the bishops, in general. Lord, what wouldst Thou have us do? We are devising a way of approach to the bishop to solicit him in this business.

"*May* 15*th.*—Clouds seem to gather round us, more and more. A letter from Mr. Glascott brings us an account that the curate of the place where Mr. Clayton resides had positively refused to read his 'Si quis,' &c.; he had, therefore, laid aside all thoughts of coming over, this being indispensable. Had just time to acquaint Mr. Kay and Mr. Thompson.

"*June* 9*th.*—After this the writer went up to London, and waited on the bishop, who promised to take the case into consideration before another ordination, and consult his brother bishops; but said he could not consistently ordain a person whose principles he disliked and thought to be pernicious.

"*June* 12*th.*—Set forward homeward after visiting Mr. Venn, at Zetting. Soon after my return home, wrote to Mr. Glascott to inform him how matters stood, with respect to Mr. Clayton and the bishop.

"*June* 20*th.*—Mr. Glascott and Mr. Kay (the vicar of Bloxham) came to Dalby, to inform us that Mr. Clayton had laid aside all thoughts of continuing to offer himself as a candidate for orders in the Church of England."

Mrs. Allenby, in her letter to me, says:—

"I have often heard it remarked, in my younger days, how little the then bishop knew what he was doing, by driving such a man, who was subsequently followed by three such sons, to exercise his piety and talent amongst Dissenters, when he might have secured the father, at least, as an ornament to the church in which he held office."

I resume Mr. George Clayton's narrative; in which he records the incident, that led to the important change which took place in his father's views, on ecclesiastical matters.

Before leaving Tunbridge Wells, where he then was, he called on an aged dissenting minister, of the name of

Shepherd. While waiting in the parlour for the coming of that gentleman, he took up a book which was lying on the window seat, and which proved to be Towgood's *Letters to White, on Dissent*, in which the subject of Church Establishments is largely treated, with equal power and good temper. He read these pages for some time, and was perfectly startled by a discussion of matters which, as yet, he had never considered at all, or at least with no gravity and attention. He instantly felt great difficulties arise, as to any further pursuit of the object on which his heart had been set; and having opened his mind freely to the venerable minister, who instructed him more fully on the heads of this important controversy, he at once abandoned the design of seeking ordination at the hands of the bishop; and resolved, at all hazards, to declare himself a Nonconformist, in obedience, as he fully believed, to the dictates of his own conscience, and to the will of Christ, as made known in the New Testament.

This unlooked-for change in his sentiments on ecclesiastical polity was most unwelcome to his patroness, who for the first time since his introduction to her met him with a frown, and expressed her deep concern and disappointment that he was seceding from the church, as by law established, and thus rendering all the care and pains she had used to facilitate his ordination abortive.

The separation of Mr. Clayton from her ladyship's Connexion very speedily followed; and the accompanying lengthened communication from her pen shows the light in which she contemplated his secession, and his identification with the Congregationalists. The letter bears no date; but no doubt was written about the middle of the year 1777, and was addressed to Mr. Clayton, at Tunbridge Wells:—

"DEAR CLAYTON,—I have received your kind letter, and though very painful to consider you no longer united in our labours for the Lord, or the services of the Connexion, with me, I yet find that renouncement of ourselves, to which abiding faith must first or last make every sacrifice, willingly and cheerfully, to Him who so forgot all things for our sakes, but the love of His Father's will only. So would my heart learn something of this great lesson of self-denial, and yield you up as an Isaac, a choice lamb of the flock, devoted to the Lord for His service —this being now done most faithfully, humbly, and *for ever*—as His property and right. I still find He will not let my care for you (as intrusted by Him) cease, while thus disinterestedly desiring His will only for you to be my point, but to lay before you most faithfully what either my little light in Divine matters, or my experience in the world, thus obliges me to afford you, before we part; and so far as those are left with you (as such) the force of truth will in the end ever have its place. First, as to the state of your heart: if this matter that lies before you is void of every earthly or interested view; if it flatters not flesh and blood in prospect; or has still a more devoted sacrifice of your whole life to the Lord Jesus's service (for such honour only belongs to His saints), I then may pronounce your object worthy of this pursuit; and the light shall shine more and more to the perfect day, while the eye is thus single for His glory alone. Was this the case all must be well, for ever, dear Clayton, with you. You are then among those sons of God who so blessedly are led by the Spirit of God.

"Your labours will be honoured; your life will praise Him; and your death confirm, by its latest moments, those victories a soul so devoted must evermore triumph in. If it be so, your high privileges will proclaim whose wise, holy, and righteous ways your happy soul has been led in; and they that so follow you, as you do Christ, shall rise up and call you blessed; but should you from youth, or less faithful sentiments taken in, accommodate matters, and any darkness be brought into those more glorious views of the Gospel, how great may that darkness prove to your heart! You have been faithful, simple, and been hitherto blest; and this while separated from every end but the most disinterested labours for the Lord. May this abide! It will not, *because you* may like it better. O no! our wills ever want a security separate from the will of God; and here danger ever commences, and perplexities, and the severities of that cross we make for ourselves,—either outwardly or inwardly, with the earthly or worldly disappointments we may have—or secretly an eye to advantage; and thus render life and your labours a heavy burden, and so heavy (observation has proved to many) as to yield themselves the slaves to interest, power, and even the love of the world again; and so our last state be worse than our first.

"On these dangers for you, my heart dwells. Should your present call not be wholly in the will of God, and not solely for His glory only, those consolations—that early met your heart, and led to Him in peace and safety—being fled, the path will be most painfully trod, through many days of sorrow, should even the tender mercies of God meet your departing spirit. But for worlds, hazard not this precipice of imminent danger to your soul, and the loss of those many blessings under the smiles of His beloved countenance. What my soul trembles for, to myself, wonder not at, it fears for you, who have not yet seen or felt the pilgrim's path so narrow to life and liberty, as my many days and nights have proved it; and which true Gospel faith, well tried by the Lord, will sufficiently evidence.

"I have been informed your engagement is to Sir H. Trelawny as an assistant. I hope a gracious young man; and though having acted by me neither as a Christian nor a gentleman in this matter, yet no prejudices that can flow from selfish ends render my wishes less faithful for his usefulness, or the many blessings I wish his own soul. His youth, inexperience of the world, united with a bigoted zeal of party, all make his excuses for the present to any fair mind; but above all is he to be pitied for the exclusion of himself from that great and popular service his great and universal services to the world might be of—this talent seems laid up in the napkin. He will now give the world's great security no trouble; he, as tolerated, subjected to laws, will contrive to obscure, by the most cautious conduct, his life in a Presbyterian meeting-house; and be bound to bow before penal laws, to escape punishment for preaching Jesus Christ to the world, and which for forty years has been gloriously owned by the Lord, in the streets, lanes, highways, and hedges, and still is—with the most blessed results. And I will venture to declare that if ever the Lord has wrought effectually in his soul, under the *present* dispensation of grace to this nation, he will break these cords, and cast away these bonds from him, if called by God to be a true apostolic minister of the Gospel. This, then, dear Clayton, you think you are to do likewise. Conscience never makes you practise this; but the doing good, I do believe, is in your views, though I believe, also, you *know not how.* If honour or profit has its plausible appearance in this for you, how much the sad reverse for that, justly so called, will a little time prove it. The changeable state of men and things renders nothing secure but from Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Fidelity to God in you may make all human smiles cease; and the reserves others make, for party or opinions, may deaden every power in your labours. Mollond and Adams (worthy creatures) have been ordained. My love made me pity, while my justice to them obliged me to agree, that they should become so subjected to man, and to those obligations so fatal to their peace, as to narrow a sphere of action as theirs; and which must render a labourer in these days of evil but a miserable prisoner at best. The future difficulties that are certain, by any plan of man's making, in which they are so limited in the services of the Gospel as they must be, according to *those* laws, make me ready to weep over them; while I could bless the Lord the poor people had such honest souls to care for them; but ease and sloth, under their legal restraints, will have so good a pillow to rest upon, that I tremble for them. Perhaps in vain! I hope so; but I have too seldom been mistaken.

"And now I must call upon that faithfulness, that experience so much makes me respect in you, to act by the Connexion, you are leaving thus, like an honest man. You have seen others' labours have been to weaken our hands; and by every artifice draw away the young and unwary, to act as partners in this most horrid, and of all others most base practice, and under which no prosperity from God will in the end ever be proved.

You have many of your brethren that love you, and your influence might serve to help an unfaithful heart to break the bonds of justice, truth, and every tie. If ever you expect success or peace from the Lord, in your own soul, I must charge you, never to have a hand, or by a secret, or open approbation, aid in labouring to destroy that sect appointed by God for many increasing blessings to the church; this the Lord will not suffer long. It is disinterestedly for His glory—or it is not. If it is for this great purpose, who must suffer, but such as arise to destroy its end and meaning, by taking to ruin those who through ignorance or temptation are made the reproach of it, by want of the common ties of common honesty or principle; and, in the face of the sun, covet and win what neither God nor man gives them any right in? If it is to fall let it fall; but not by your hands, in part, who have secured God's appointment for you in it, with much love and faithfulness. Many plagues will follow to all such,—however their cunning may now cause them to laugh at the base arts and villany that succeed to the ruin of others,—and who lie in wait to deceive. This view of justice will bind me ever to the strictest distance from you. None of your labours shall suffer from any belonging to me; and I shall require you to receive none that belongs to the college; as I will not, for worlds, countenance or allow the labours of any from among you. As none, as honest men, will enter those labours you are engaged in; so none, I expect, in yours will venture to break those bonds of justice to our labours also. Nothing can be more extensive than my love for all; yet nothing more remote from my judgment or experience than your present obligations are now subjected to; and as that part has all possible supplies of instruction, it cannot want our help or services. The world is before us; let not Ephraim vex Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. The most charitable wishes may subsist, while at a distance, and out of the reach of ungodly men, who would make merchandise of the honest and the simple. I desire to be such, alone, for ever.

"Thus you see I have with the greatest kindness to you, and also with the greatest abhorrence of the professing deceivers, spoke my whole mind, that nothing may arise after that shall cause me to esteem you less, as an honest man and a Christian—both which appear scarce in these our days; and thus may the Lord make you faithful, upright, and honest, in little and much. How often shall I lament you, shut up in dry, dead Presbyterian meeting-houses; wise enough to despise the life, power, and spirit with which to many you have so often spoken, and who so affectionately received the sweet Gospel of Jesus Christ from you; and your gifts and grace withering under the unprofitable hearers! May this never be the case! or cause me to lament that sorrowful conclusion of all your labours which has been the case and *is* the case with others, now weary of the political task, of pleasing for a miserable support; and who, having suffered loss, exclude themselves altogether from views of usefulness. As this may be the last time you may ever wish to hear from me, I desire in love, and in the most earnest faithfulness, to render my account. I can now leave every future event in His blessed hands; and so commending you in all tenderness of spirit, continue to remain, dear Clayton,

"Faithfully and affectionately yours,
"S. HUNTINGDON."

Chapter V.

1776–1778.

SIR HARRY TRELAWNY.—HIS ORDINATION AT SOUTHAMPTON.—MR. CLAYTON BECOMES HIS ASSISTANT IN CORNWALL.—LETTERS FROM REV. RICHARD KNILL AND SIR HARRY TRELAWNY.—LABOURS IN CORNWALL.—SIR HARRY'S MARRIAGE.—HIS APOSTASY.—SEPARATION BETWEEN THE FELLOW-LABOURERS.—SIR HARRY'S CONFORMITY.—LETTERS ON THE SUBJECT.

Preaching in London, Mr. Clayton was introduced to Sir Harry Trelawny, a baronet of an ancient and honourable house in Cornwall, who, at that period of his life, was associated with the countess in her zealous movements, and preached conjointly with him at the places before-mentioned, in London, drawing after him large and attentive congregations. Sir Harry was in the heyday of youth; extremely fascinating in his person and manners, and filled with holy ardour in preaching a free and full salvation, seeking to save the souls of men from condemnation and death. He formed a strong friendship for the companion of his labours; so that their hearts were knit together in ties so tender, intimate, and endeared, that they were often compared to Jonathan and David.

It is not known whether, at the critical juncture in Mr. Clayton's life, referred to in the last chapter, he imparted his new ecclesiastical views to his friend and fellow-labourer; but it is certain that the baronet became at this time a Nonconformist likewise, and avowed his decided preference for a Presbyterian, or Congregational discipline, or rather a mixture of both.

Acting upon his convictions, Sir Harry was publicly set apart to the office of pastor or overseer, in the church of Christ, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. This solemnity took place at Southampton, April 22nd, 1777, with more of pomp and circumstance than usually attend services, when administered according to the simple forms of Protestant Dissenters. A large platform was raised, covered with green cloth, and a velvet cushion provided for the young baronet to kneel upon. Constables were in attendance, to guard against disorder and disturbance. The crowd, anxious to witness the celebration of the rite, under circumstances by no means common, was immense, and composed of all classes, fashionable and unfashionable, from the town and neighbourhood. The chapel above Bar, the pulpit of which was then filled by the Rev. William Kingsbury, and subsequently by the Rev. Thomas Adkins, who still continues his ministry there, crowned with the years and honours of more than half a century, was never known to contain within its walls, for the then size of the building, so large, so august, and so interested an assembly. The Rev. Mr. Ashburner, of Poole; and the Rev. William Kingsbury, with other neighbouring ministers, took part in the work of the day. The ordination service was afterwards published, and contains a noble confession of faith by Sir Harry, with a lucid and fearless declaration of his views on the points of church government.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Clayton was engaged by Sir Harry as an assistant in the ministry, at his family seat at Looe, in Cornwall. Here he resided for some time, having the free use of a large library, and being treated by the lord of the castle with uniform kindness, affection, and confidence, as though he were his equal, his familiar acquaintance. Here also these two young men officiated, conjointly, at the chapel in Looe, and in a widely-extended circuit, through which they itinerated, holding forth the word of life amid the dark towns and villages of that county. They performed their excursions on horseback; preaching in chapels,—where such existed, or in private houses, or in the open air, as opportunity offered. Many received the word with joy, and embraced the message of reconciling grace. Here outrage and persecution were unknown. This is to be accounted for, doubtless, by the consideration generally paid to Sir Harry, whose rank—standing in society as the head of one of the most ancient families in Cornwall—served to awe the vulgar, and to silence the polite. There were living, till within a few years past, some aged persons who remember well Mr. Clayton and his preaching, and who attribute their spiritual birth to a new and heavenly life, and their growth in grace, to his early and earnest labours among them.

Subjoined is an extract from a letter addressed to Mr. Clayton, by the excellent and devoted Richard Knill, who gives an account of a visit he paid to Cornwall, on behalf of the London Missionary Society, in 1838, when he met with some of these first fruits of Mr. Clayton's early labours.

"Honoured Sir,—On the 12th of September last, I preached at Looe, in Cornwall, to a large and interesting congregation. Mr. James, the minister, interested me very much about your early labours in this place, and referred to your kindness in later days. I found that it was just sixty-one years ago since you first spake in the name of the Lord in that place. What favours and honours has your adored Master heaped upon you during this long period! not only on your own person and labours, but on your dear children and their labours. 'He hath not dealt so with every family: praise ye the Lord.'

"On the morning of the 13th, Mr. James took me to see an old lady who lives just by the bridge. She is nearly your own age, and was converted under your ministry. She forgets many things which happened six months ago, but she has a vivid recollection of your prayers, and your sermons, and your texts. Her daughter is very devoted to the cause of Christ, and I guess she is the chief supporter of Mr. James. The people in general do little for him.

"After our morning visit we ascended the mountain to a farmhouse, where we dined with a pious family who attend Mr. James's ministry. The son of the good farmer preaches at Polperro, when Mr. James is preaching at Looe.

"At two p.m. we had service at Polperro, and a very cheering sight it was. Before I left the pulpit a novel scene presented itself. An aged man, with an ear trumpet in his hand, ascended the pulpit stairs, and called out aloud to me, 'Do you know the venerable Clayton?' 'Yes, I do, and his sons also.' 'Oh, I am glad to see any person that knows him.' 'Do you know him?' I inquired. 'Know him!' said the hoary-headed veteran, 'I heard him preach his first sermon in these parts threescore years ago.' 'Was Mr. Clayton's ministry blessed to you, sir?' 'Blessed! It was blessed to everybody, more or less. *Sir Harry* was the means of my conversion before Mr. Clayton came; but I was nourished up in the words of sound doctrine under the venerable Clayton. Give my love to him. He will know me.' Much more followed; but I have forgotten the good man's name; though I never shall forget the circumstances connected with my visit to Polperro. May the evening of your days be increasingly tranquil and happy, is the sincere prayer of, honoured sir,

"Your very obedient servant,
"RICHARD KNILL.

"MISSION HOUSE, 18*th December*, 1838."

Mr. Clayton was ever striving, together with his beloved colleague, so to proclaim the truth and to seek the profit of many, that they might be saved.

The few letters of Sir Harry to his friend and assistant which remain, strongly evince their mutual sympathy, affectionate regard, and devotion to their work. The following was written about the time of the commencement of their joint labours.

"My dear Sir,—At last I am about to answer your acceptable letter. I would by no means wish you to preach to the injury of your health. We must do what we can, as affectionate yoke-fellows and labourers in the same vineyard, to serve the little places around, as often as opportunities may be given.

"I hope and pray this situation may be agreeable. For my own part I can only say from what I have heard of you, dear sir, 'I am as thou art; my horses as thy horses; my house as thy house; my heart as thy heart.'

"The sooner you come, the better; however, if you must stay three months longer with Lady Huntingdon, I can do tolerably well till September, when I propose, God willing, to go to the Isle of Wight, where is, I trust, a plentiful harvest.

"I hope, my dear sir, we shall be united in the warmest Christian friendship, and that our relationship in the dear Lord's vineyard may be the means of assisting each, and comforting each.

"I cannot endure the thought of grieving Lady Huntingdon. Therefore I hope, in your letter, you will acquaint her ladyship with your call to Chatham, as well as to Looe. That she may, if possible, be convinced that I have not seduced you from her Connexion. I shall expect to hear from you very soon, that I may know when you propose to be here.—I am, my dear sir, your very affectionate and faithful brother in the ministry,

"H. Trelawny.

"Trelawny, near Looe, *June* 11*th*, 1777."

Among other places which he visited, was the house of Mr. Martin, at Cungurrell, near Gerans, which was opened for Divine service, and where the glad tidings were sounded, both by Sir Harry and himself, to the joy of not a few, who fled for refuge from the wrath to come to the asylum of the cross. Out of these house-lectures arose the little chapel at Portscatha now standing, and which has ever since been supplied by a succession of faithful evangelical pastors.*

In the year 1855 the following letter was received by one of Mr. Clayton's sons, from a lady in Cornwall, which will introduce the reader to some notices of his early labours in that county.

"CUNGURRELL, *October 9th*, 1855.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I much fear you will consider this a very singular epistle, but one for which I have an apology to offer. I wish to know whether or not I am addressing a son of the gentleman who bore the same name as yourself, and who, in connexion with the late Sir Harry Trelawny, father of the present Sir S. Trelawny, lord lieutenant of Cornwall,—perhaps sixty years since, and long before my recollection,—visited Cornwall, for the express purpose of spreading the glad tidings of salvation in this remote province of our island? I have heard that those gentlemen were the first dissenting ministers who ever preached in this county. What induces me to make the inquiry is this:—A late worthy minister of this parish, Mr. James, of Portscatha, frequently spoke in deservedly admiring terms of your repeated kindnesses to him; and among other circumstances that you had presented him with a gig, which, in his declining years, added considerably to his comfort, when his strength so far declined, that he was unable to take the tedious round of his weekly duties, without some such conveyance. I have heard him, on many occasions, mention your name; but delicacy forbids my repeating the overflowing expressions of his grateful heart. I once said, 'The name of Clayton reminds me of one of whom I have often heard my late father speak, in connexion with Sir Harry Trelawny. Was that gentleman a father to your friend?' Mr. James replied in the affirmative. It then occurred to me that these gentlemen were the same whom my late grandfather entertained at his house, and for whose accommodation he erected (solely at his own expense) a small chapel; he being at that period the only person of respectability in those districts who countenanced dissent, and who during his earthly course entirely supported the little sanctuary he had erected on his estate, Cungurrell, the place, dear sir, from which I now address you.

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* I paid a visit to Portscatha in the autumn of this year (1866). The chapel, which has stood for nearly ninety years, was about to undergo an entire remodelling; and with a new and convenient school-room will meet the growing wants of this beautiful sea-side locality. Under the intelligent ministry of the Rev. George Orme, aided by the devoted labours of his interesting family, this cause has undergone a thorough revival.—T. A.

"Cungurrell was the first spot in this locality where the word of God was preached, and the first ministers were your excellent father and his friend, Sir Harry Trelawny.

"A pious tradesman, at his sole expense, has this summer erected a new chapel, which was opened about a fortnight since. It is within half a mile of this place. I attended for the twofold purpose of hearing a good sermon, and of contributing a trifle to so good a cause. We had an excellent sermon; but judge of my surprise at what followed. An old worthy had been employing his pen, for many days previous, to give the audience some account of the commencement of religion in this neighbourhood. His statement was to the effect that the Gospel was first preached in this parish by Sir Harry Trelawny and his friend, Mr. Clayton. 'The only person who countenanced their God-like mission was Mr. Martin, of Cungurrell, who not only received and cordially entertained these messengers of the Most High, but opened his house for preaching, by inviting the poor of this and the neighbouring parishes to attend, where they were accommodated with the best apartment the place afforded. As numbers increased the heart of this good man was inclined to do his utmost to accommodate them. He then constructed, from a cottage of his, a neat compact chapel, where the Gospel was regularly preached by the above-named gentlemen, assisted in after times by the Rev. Mr. Wills, the rector of Burgan. Next followed some students from Lady Huntingdon's college; and the work went on,' to use this good man's language, '*gloriously*. On the 6th of January, 1777, Sir Harry preached in this new chapel to an attentive audience, from the third chapter of the book of Judges, and the twentieth verse, "I have a message from God unto thee," which,' the good man said, 'I have heard described as a most *thrilling* sermon.'

"Then followed a pleasing detail of the many excellencies of my worthy grandfather and father, 'who,' he was pleased to add, 'would not suffer his left hand to know what his right hand gave.' These humble effusions, on reaching my ear so unexpectedly, created a thrill of delight I would not have exchanged for all the pleasures the world could bestow."

That Sir Harry entertained at that time no other desire and intention but to live and die the pastor of the church at Looe, is obvious from an epitaph which he wrote for his own grave, whenever it might please God to call him hence, and which was given by him to Mr. Clayton.

NEAR THIS PLACE LIETH BURIED THE BODY OF
THE REVEREND SIR HARRY TRELAWNY, BART., A.B.,
THE FIRST MINISTER OF THIS CHURCH,
WHO DIED ——, IN THE TWENTY-THIRD YEAR OF HIS AGE; [*sic*]
EXPECTING THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

Indulge no sorrows, shed no tears;
His soul, upborne on eagles' wings,
Is far removed from trouble, sin, and fears;
And in the bosom of his God for ever loves and sings.

After awhile Sir Harry was smitten by the charms of a lady, who was young, beautiful, and pious,—the only child of her parents. It was said that her hand had been previously sought and promised to a young gentleman, then pursuing his studies for the church, at the University of Cambridge. The parents of the lady, dazzled by the title and fortune of the baronet, while she herself could not fail to be pleased with the agreeable person and winning manners of her new suitor, determined to bestow her in marriage upon Sir Harry. The matter was rather precipitately concluded, and the union duly solemnized in 1778. When he brought home his bride to Trelawny, he was received at the hall door by his assistant and the retinue of his domestic servants, who vied with each other in giving to him and his companion a respectful and affectionate welcome.

A large amount of letters had accumulated during his absence, which he proceeded to open and read. One of these was unusually long, and closely written. As he read this, Mr. Clayton observed that his countenance changed—he trembled, and at length threw down the letter. Supper was announced, but he refused to eat; and notwithstanding the entreaties of his wife, urged with the most tender assiduities, even to the cutting the food upon his plate, he could not be prevailed on to touch a morsel. When her ladyship retired, he arose in a state of almost frantic excitement, and addressing Mr. Clayton, as he was wont, in a familiar style, exclaimed, "Johnny, if it were not for the hope of a glorious immortality, I should blow my brains out with a pistol." "Alas!" replied his colleague, filled with consternation and grief, "what can have happened to cloud this scene of gladness?" "Read that letter," said he, handing to him that which he had been seen to peruse with so manifest an emotion. It was from the young gentleman at Cambridge, stating his attachment to the lady, the encouragement he had received, and the confident hope he had cherished, not without good reason, of one day claiming her for his bride. He appealed to his sense of honour, as a gentleman and a Christian, not to persevere in his suit; and concluded in a strain of heart-touching expostulation, well fitted to prostrate the firmest nerves, and to subdue the stoutest courage. Mr. Clayton endeavoured to calm his friend's mind by every appropriate consideration, derived from the all-disposing providence of God, his own innocence of any dishonourable motive or design, the extreme youth of the lady, and her unconditional submission, probably, to parental wishes and persuasions. In some degree he was successful in tranquillizing the agitation of his spirit; but here was the sting;—the deed was irretrievably done, the remonstrance had come too late. Nor was there anything in the issue of this tragical scene to alleviate the sorrow. The young clergyman, when he found that his loss was irretrievable, sunk into a state of hopeless depression; his health declined, death ensued,—and it was believed from a broken heart. Here was a fair morning of earthly felicity suddenly overcast, and followed by long years of regret. Not that Sir Harry and his lady lived unhappily; for the reverse was the fact; and a numerous progeny was the result of their marriage, the last surviving member of which, Miss Anne Letitia Trelawny, departed this life at the Esplanade, Plymouth, in the year 1860. But it cannot be disguised that this incident had a very unsettling influence on Sir Harry's mind and habits, and may serve to account, in some degree at least, for the many changes of which he subsequently became the victim, and explain that lamentable versatility which characterized his course, even to the end of his days.

Very shortly after Sir Harry's marriage the first of these changes occurred, by which the two friends were led into diverse paths, and eventually were separated from each other. Not that their mutual regard was at any time entirely broken, so long as life continued; but the religious opinions, adopted by Sir Harry, placed a gulf between him and his assistant. On these matters they became wide as the poles asunder. At that time the spirit of Latitudinarianism prevailed, to a melancholy extent, amongst the Nonconforming churches throughout the West of England. Arianism and Socinianism, those pestilent heresies, were very rife; and many Christian professors were turned away from their steadfastness, and from the simplicity that is in Christ. The titled minister of Looe was much courted, flattered, and caressed; till by enticing words and fair speeches, he came to adopt the Shibboleth of the rationalistic party, and to renounce, or to hold very loosely, some of the essential doctrines of Gospel faith. From this fatal snare, through the great mercy and controlling grace of God, Mr. Clayton was preserved. He argued, expostulated, and discussed, with great seriousness, the points of difference; and stood himself firm and immovable as a rock.

The immediate occasion of the separation between Sir Harry and his assistant was this. An association of Nonconformist ministers was holden in the West of England, at which one of the number was to preach on a given subject—that subject was "Candour towards the opinions of other men." Much was spoken on this favourite theme, and candour was lauded to the skies. After the dinner, which succeeded the public service, speeches were made, with reference to the points which had been discussed in the hearing of the assembly; when a gentleman, who was held in repute for his learning, rose to address his brethren; and having complimented the preacher of the day, warmed as he proceeded, and at last affirmed that, in his opinion, every Calvinist must be either a knave or a fool. At this Mr. Clayton arose from the table, took his hat, and addressing the chair, observed, that after the practical comment which they had just heard, upon a discourse on "candour towards the opinions of other men," he felt, for one, that he could not longer remain in such an atmosphere as that; and bowing respectfully to the company, retired;—not, however, without being followed by several who were like minded with himself. This was considered by Sir Harry as a direct declaration of hostility to his opinions,—a breach not to be healed; and he was as willing to release Mr. Clayton from his engagements as he himself was desirous of terminating them; and so, without any angry feeling, and with no mutual accusations or reproaches, they were parted asunder, to unite no more in this world, on religious grounds. Sir Harry was, however, subsequently rescued from the shoals of deadly error, whither in an evil hour he had drifted, and restored to sound sentiments; having taken orders in the Established Church, and, of course, subscribed,—it is presumed on full conviction,—the orthodox articles and formularies of that communion. He became afterwards a prebend of Exeter cathedral, but eventually died within the pale of the Church of Rome.

As Sir Harry was a noticeable man in his day, and stood prominently before the religious world, at the close of the last century, two letters, bearing upon this subject,—written to his old friend and associate in the ministry at the time he was contemplating this step, —are here given. They are of a date subsequent to the time at which we have arrived in Mr. Clayton's biography, but as no reference to the versatile baronet, as he was designated, will be made after this chapter, they are introduced here for the sake of preserving continuity, and to render unnecessary any further allusion to this business.

"Direct for me at KINGSTON, near TAUNTON, SOMERSET.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do not often write to you, because a mere chit-chat letter is of all things to me most disagreeable.

When I have anything to say, I shall always take the liberty to rely upon your former regard; and believe that you will assure me of your continued friendship, by assisting me with your advice, &c., &c. In full confidence I write this, and beg that Mr. F—— may not know its contents, for you know that it is as well to publish it by the bawling of the common crier.

"When we were walking from your house to Hackney, you hinted to me that you thought it most advisable for me to go back to the Church. I have thought much on this hint, especially as it came from a dissenting clergyman. All my *old* friends say the very same. The whole world knows that I have been indiscreet and precipitate—that, as a young man, I ought rather to have acquiesced in the opinions of others than set up my own youthful, and consequently not matured, judgment. Now the question is, whether, if I can conscientiously conform, you would advise me so to do; as the only way to recover my credit, and be of any service in my age. I thank God, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Exon, and others, have behaved to me in the most friendly manner. Do not the Dissenters expect this step? Will they, do you think, blame me more than I can bear? or, rather, in one word, do not you think, upon the whole, that it would be a right and proper measure for one in my situation and with my connexions? Write me by the return of the post, freely and fully; and again I beseech you do not even let your wife, without the most positive assurance of secresy, see this letter.—I am, my dear sir, your very affectionate and sincere friend,

"H. TRELAWNY.

"*June* 27*th*, 1780."

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind letter, received this morning, deserves my warmest acknowledgments, and an explicit account of this whole important matter. Sensible that my situation in life was not as could be wished by myself and real friends, I wrote in the last autumn to Dr. Priestley, desiring his advice. He gave me a very friendly answer, and told me that he thought it right that I should leave off preaching, and be rather an encourager than a teacher of religion, &c. To be a clergyman has been my uninterrupted wish for these fourteen years, and I cannot by any means return to a lay-habit. After this I determined to apologize for my Methodism, and restore myself to my friends. My letter to Mr. Alcock was therefore printed, and has been considered by many as a preparatory step to my restoration. Ever since Christmas I have suffered, at times, almost inexpressible anguish. I have done as a wise man should do; I have consulted all my *old* sincerely-attached friends, who have loved and regarded my person, not my opinions—the Archbishop of York, the Dean of Christchurch, Dr. Hooke, and many others; they all with one consent advise me to return, if I can conscientiously, as the best, the only, the sure way to recover my credit, and do good in the world. The Bishop of Exeter I have been acquainted with these two years, nearly; and his friendship and kindness upon this occasion are above all praise. I am now well weighing and considering all that has been—that can be said; and may, perhaps, some time or other make a determination. The report of my conforming fills these two counties; and all my Church acquaintance are abundantly joyful. With respect to my saying anything illiberal respecting the Dissenters, &c., never fear, never suspect it. I am now grown wiser by dearly-bought experience. Besides, I am very consistently the friend of candour and moderation, and of the religious privileges of mankind.

"If you will favour me again, I shall rejoice. Direct again to Kingston, and the letter will be forwarded. Why did you not mention Mrs. Clayton?—I am, most affectionately yours,

"H. Trelawny.

"*July* 6*th*, 1780."

Seven years afterwards, the first of the following two letters was received; and ten years subsequent to that the second, which closed the correspondence of those who had once been such firm and loving friends. Although both lived for more than forty years after the date of the final letter, they do not appear ever to have met again.

"Dear Sir,—You will give me credit, I trust, for the disappointment I felt when I received your friendly letter in

Switzerland. Ever retaining a sense of the months we passed here together, it would certainly give me much pleasure to meet you again on the same ground, and talk of the various scenes and accidents of life we have both been witnesses to since our separation. On the great subject of divinity, too, we might have talked with satisfaction, I would hope, as far as our sentiments coincide—room sufficient for long conversation: for I much mistake if, on the doctrine that distinguishes our religion from all others, as the only one for fallen man, our opinions are not materially the same. There are words which controversialists have employed which I, perhaps, should have avoided using; but in divinity, as well as in other sciences, words are only useful as they lead to ideas. I will venture to hope we may yet one day meet at Trelawny, and renew the remembrance of days that are passed for ever. My health is not the strongest. I am not to expect much relief from living abroad, and shall now, therefore, probably no more make the trial. I have felt a satisfaction no words can express to you, in my return to the Church of England; and I have now had seven years' probation. See how the time passes! It is eight or nine years since we parted. I am sincerely glad you are happy; and earnestly hope your happiness will continue till you go to the enjoyment of it, where it cannot for a moment be interrupted. The letter you mention, disagreeable as it is, you will greatly oblige me by enclosing to me, at your earliest convenience. It gives me satisfaction to find it not destroyed, for reasons, when we meet, I may be able to tell you.

"I desire to be remembered to Mrs. Clayton, and would send affectionate wishes to your children; accept them on their account, and believe me your faithful and affectionate, humble servant,

"HARRY TRELAWNY.

"TRELAWNY, *June 20th*, 1787."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I return you many thanks for your kindness in writing to me; but you seem so very imperfectly acquainted with the circumstances of the case, that our correspondence *on this subject* will be quickly closed. With those clergymen whom you describe by the word evangelical, greatly as they may be entitled to my respect, I can have very little intercourse: for there are important points of Christian doctrine and Christian practice on which I could not talk with them in a free, unrestrained manner, owing to difference of opinion; and when the conversation is restrained, how much pleasure and improvement are lost!

"I have reason to hope that my ministry has been useful, and desire to return thanks; but you do not seem to be aware that, had I reason to think otherwise, my way to a foreign climate would be more perfectly clear, and my stay in England during the remainder of my life, be it long or short, would probably be of no great continuance. As it is, the advantages I receive from being abroad are too considerable, not to be desired, and enjoyed with gratitude—at least they ought to be so enjoyed.

"It will always give me pleasure to hear from you; and, at whatever distance we may live from one another, I hope we shall always be friends.

"One word I think it necessary to add. On the great doctrines of atonement and grace, there is, I trust, no material difference in our sentiments, though there may be in our expressions; but I would beg you to observe *that I do not wish to be classed with the clergymen whom you call evangelical.* I would rather have said this in conversation than in writing, as the manner, &c., would have removed, or prevented rather, all possible suspicion of disrespect.—I am, my dear sir, your affectionate, faithful, and obliged servant,

"HARRY TRELAWNY.

"TRELAWNY, *August 9th*, 1797."

Chapter VI.

1778–1789.

MR. CLAYTON RETURNS TO LONDON.—WEIGHHOUSE CHAPEL, EASTCHEAP.—INVITATION TO THE PASTORATE THERE.—LETTER FROM LADY GLENORCHY, INVITING TO EDINBURGH.—SETTLES AT THE WEIGHHOUSE.—ORDINATION.—MOSAIC ECCLESIASTICISM.—PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL FUND BOARDS.—SECOND LETTER FROM LADY GLENORCHY.—CONSCIENTIOUS DEACON.—LAXITY IN ATTENDANCE ON WORSHIP.—A GIFTED BROTHER.—LETTER FROM REV. AUGUSTUS TOPLADY TO MRS. FLOWER.—THE FULLER FAMILY.—MR. CLAYTON'S MARRIAGE.

Mr. Clayton, through Sir Harry's change of views, was placed in a predicament at once delicate, uncomfortable, and perilous; but the Lord of the churches, who holdeth the stars in His right hand, appeared in a signal manner on his behalf. At this juncture the church of Christ, meeting in the chapel known by the name of the King's Weighhouse, in Little Eastcheap, London, was destitute of a pastor; having been deprived by death of the services of the Rev. Samuel Wilton, D.D., a man greatly beloved, and held in general admiration, for his talents, his virtues, and his ministerial fidelity and consistency. He had died very recently, in the prime of his days and usefulness, in consequence of a fever, caught in visiting a family of his charge, when an infectious distemper was committing its ravages among them. He was as generally lamented as he was highly appreciated, both by his own flock and the public at large. It happened that the late Nathaniel Fenn, Esq., was at this time travelling, in the way of business, in Cornwall, and accidentally heard Mr. Clayton preach at Looe. He was agreeably impressed by the doctrine, the manner, and the earnestness of the minister; and on his return home strongly recommended him to the elders of the church at the Weighhouse. They invited him to spend a few weeks among them, as a probationer for the pulpit. He responded to the call; and soon after was heard, approved, and, by an almost unanimous vote, invited, by the following letter, to take the pastoral oversight of the widowed church.

"Reverend Sir,—It has pleased the allwise Disposer of events to remove, by death, from the church of Christ assembling at the Weighhouse, in Eastcheap, their much beloved and most valuable pastor, the late Rev. Dr. Samuel Wilton, under whose ministry they were greatly edified, and whose loss they much deplore; but relying on the Great Head of the church, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, they requested several of the reverend ministers of Christ to spend some time in prayer with them, to implore the direction of God to lead them, by His providence, to the choice of a faithful minister of the blessed Gospel, who should teach them the truth in sincerity. It is therefore with great pleasure we view the method which the blessed God hath taken, in answer to our prayers, by directing you to town, without our knowledge, and thereby accepting our invitation to preach to us for a short season. I am happy to inform you that the kind assistance you have afforded them has given great satisfaction, and you have their thanks for it; I am also further to mention that it is their unanimous request that you accept of the pastoral care of the church.

"I do now, by their order and approbation, accordingly invite you to the pastoral office and spiritual care of them; not doubting but that God, who hath thus by His unerring providence led you to us, will abundantly bless and succeed your labours for the salvation of many souls, which will be their constant prayer; amongst whom must ever join, dear sir, your very sincere friend and well-wisher in Christ,

"Samuel Ewen, Jun., *Secretary.*

"Signed in behalf of the committee and the church in general.

"Coles's Coffee-House, *October 26th*, 1778."

The only person who did not vote in Mr. Clayton's favour was a lady of the name of Flower, a person of some note and influence in the religious community to which she belonged. She had united herself with the church under the pastoral charge of Dr. Wilton, whose friendship she enjoyed, and in whose ministry she took great delight. Feeling as one recently bereaved, she could not bring her mind to make choice of another pastor; and hers was the only vote among the members of the church and congregation withheld from the young probationer. This lady subsequently became his wife!

Almost simultaneously with these proceedings at the Weighhouse, Mr. Clayton's ministrations attracted the notice, and engaged the approval, of that excellent person, the late Lady Glenorchy, of the noble house of Breadalbane. She was associated with the Countess of Huntingdon, in her great work of evangelizing the kingdom; and gave Mr. Clayton an invitation permanently to fill the pulpit of her chapel at Edinburgh. The letter bears date six weeks later than the call from the Weighhouse, and is as follows:—

"EDINBURGH, the 13*th* of *December*, 1778.

"REVEREND SIR,—It having pleased the Great Head of the church to deprive us last summer of our valuable pastor by death—and all attempts to supply his place in this country having proved ineffectual,—I have now resolved to seek for one among the Dissenters in England; and from information received of your character and gifts, I am inclined to believe there are none of them who would more exactly suit our congregation than yourself. As it is impossible for me to explain everything relating to the plan upon which my chapel is conducted, by letter,—as to make you so far acquainted with many particulars concerning the country and the people, as to remove the prejudices which will naturally arise in your mind against a removal from London to Edinburgh—I have prevailed upon Mr. Dickie to be the bearer of this letter, who (from his connexion with the chapel as one of the consistory) is able to give you full information concerning everything you may wish to know. He is a person you may freely confide in; to him I refer you for particulars; and shall only add that, if you see it as your duty to accept of this invitation, you may depend upon my doing everything in my power to make your situation in this country useful and comfortable.—I am, reverend sir, your very sincere well-wisher in the Gospel of Christ,

"W. Glenorchy."

After weighing the matter with all the respectful deliberation due to her ladyship's kind preference, he was led to decline the honourable post in "the modern Athens," and determined in favour of the church in Little Eastcheap. He ventured, however, to commend to her ladyship's notice the Rev. Snell Jones, afterwards Dr. Jones, a fellow-student, and his very particular friend, who, having been heard and approved by the congregation, was appointed to her ladyship's chapel, and continued to labour there, with manifest tokens of usefulness, till the day of his death. No man was more respected in the city of Edinburgh than he. He came to his grave at an advanced age, with unstained honour, and as a shock of corn cometh in its season. Mr. Clayton, after his settlement in London, periodically visited the metropolis of the north, and preached in Dr. Jones's pulpit. The fulness of Gospel truth,—announced in a tone of uncompromising decision, and enforced and illustrated by a constant appeal to Holy Scripture, which characterized Mr. Clayton's sermons,—rendered him peculiarly acceptable to his Scottish audiences. Dr. Jones, when in London, visited his friend's house, preached in his pulpit, and bestowed many kind attentions upon his rising family.

On Wednesday, November 25th, 1778, Mr. Clayton's ordination was solemnized at the Weighhouse, in the presence of a numerous assembly. The Rev. Nathaniel Jennings, of Islington, commenced the service; Dr. Gibbons preached an introductory discourse, and received the confession of faith; the Rev. R. Winter, of New Court, offered the ordination prayer; the venerable Dr. Trotter, of the Scottish Kirk, Swallow Street, gave the charge to the young minister, from 1 Tim. vi. 20, with so much gravity, tenderness, and power, that the impression of it remained with him to the last hour of life; and after another prayer by Dr. Hunter, the Rev. Samuel Brewer, of Stepney, preached a most animated sermon to the people.

It was not long before the congregation was greatly multiplied, and the church proportionably enlarged; and, what is of far greater importance than any numerical increase, many were brought, by the faithful manifestation of the truth, from the paths of error, sin, and death, to repentance and godly sorrow, and to that faith in a crucified Redeemer which leads to newness of life. From many a pew the cry was heard, "What must I do to be saved?"

Not a few from the world without were brought to listen to the preacher, who never troubled themselves or even thought about the special ecclesiastical position he held. An amusing illustration of this was supplied by Mr. G——, a surveyor and architect of eminence and celebrity, who was in some way or other induced to hear the young minister, and found his word, through the teaching of the Holy One, to be spirit and life. Having received the truth in the love of it, Mr. G. —as is usually the case—became anxious to bring others to hear the man whose instrumentality had been blessed to his own soul. He addressed himself more particularly to a professional friend, requesting that he would spend a Sunday at his house and hear his minister. "Who and what is he?" said the friend. "Come and see," was the reply. "No," said the gentleman, "I will not hear him till I know what he is called, and to what class or denomination he belongs." "I can scarcely tell you, as I never inquired particularly into the matter," rejoined Mr. G——; "but I have heard that he is considered to be an *Independent Presbyterian Methodist.*" This is a description which sounds strangely, and was never before heard of; yet it is strictly accurate and just. As to his own convictions he was a Congregationalist; he became the pastor of an old Presbyterian church, by their voluntary choice; and, as we have seen, his training was under the Countess of Huntingdon, who was a principal agent in the movements of the Calvinistic Methodists. In allusion to this circumstance several sagacious observers have remarked that such a sect as this is truly a desideratum in the churches of Christ—a community which shall combine the simplicity, freedom, and elasticity of Independency, the order and authority of Presbyterianism, and the life, fire, and unction of Methodism. Each system separately has its acknowledged defects. An amalgamation of the three would, it is believed, remedy these defects, and bring the church of Christ to a nearer conformity with the New Testament standard.

Not long after his settlement at the Weighhouse, Mr. Clayton's mind and conscience were troubled to know how to act, in a matter of some importance to others as well as to his own people. The church had been long accustomed to make an annual collection for the *Presbyterian* Fund Board, the object of which is the relief of ministers whose stipend is inadequate to their support. The English Presbyterians at this time had very generally departed from the faith of their great predecessors—the Baxters, the Henrys, the Bates, and the Mantons,—and had appropriated to themselves, by a patent of their own creation, the appellation of Unitarians, which, by the way, conveys no just notion of their distinguishing tenets—*Antitrinitarian* being the term which best describes their peculiar dogmas; for all consistent Trinitarians are as strenuous advocates and supporters of the unity of God as those can possibly be who assume to themselves the name of Unitarian. Mr. Clayton felt no difficulty in pleading for these ministers, as necessitous men, and gentlemen of admitted science, scholarship, and moral worth; but he could not, in his conscience, regard them as the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ; he conceived that they were preaching "another Gospel;" and so far from exalting Christ as the salvation of God to all the ends of the earth, he beheld them as employing their talents, learning, and influence, to cast Him down from His excellency, and to reduce Him from His essential dignity,—who was in the beginning with God, and was God—to the level of a mere man, fallible and peccable as themselves; although a great teacher, a bright exemplar, and a heroic martyr. How could he, with these views, continue to collect money for these parties, as ministers, without a dishonest evasion or compromise? Yet he felt that he was still young in his office; he had a great dislike to innovation of any kind; he was pained to run counter to the opinions and predilections of some of the old standards in the church, who from long habit had been attached to the Presbyterian Fund; while he was perfectly aware of the odium which would attach to his public secession from that body, in many quarters. After much consideration and prayer he resolved to call the church together, candidly and without reserve to state to them his difficulties, and to propose, after fully assigning his reasons, that in future the contributions of the church should be carried to the Congregational Fund Board. The proposal was carried at the church meeting, without a dissentient voice, although some few were not overmuch pleased with the measure; and one member in particular, a wealthy and most respectable banker in the city, unused to carry matters by the voice of the people, was heard to say, as he left the assembly, that he did not understand how things of this sort were to be "crammed down their throats" by an appeal to the whole assembly. No further uneasiness was created by the change, which was cordially welcomed by the majority of the congregation, that, for nearly fifty years of his subsequent ministry, continued their contributions to this ancient and most useful institution; (and under his successor, the Rev. T. Binney, have done the same down to the present day) frequently sending more than £100 per annum towards the relief of the poor and afflicted ministers of Jesus Christ.

In connexion with this subject the following letter, from the excellent Lady Glenorchy, shows the interest she took in the maintenance of Gospel ordinances among the poor, as well as the estimate she had formed of Mr. Clayton's influence, and of his readiness to aid her in her work of mercy.

"BARNTON, 3*rd* of *March*, 1779.

"REVEREND SIR,—I received the enclosed petition, a few days ago, from a poor congregation of Presbyterians at Leek, in Staffordshire, who have hitherto been upon the Presbyterian

Fund list. A late dispute about the settlement of a minister, which, happily for them, ended in their getting a very pious man, and a Gospel preacher, makes them afraid that some of the gentlemen of the Presbyterian persuasion may be prejudiced against them, and may wish to deprive them of their annual donation from the fund. I have every reason to believe the facts, as stated in their petition, are strictly true, and feel interested in the welfare of this little church now emerging from Socinian darkness.

"Having no acquaintance with any of the English Presbyterians, and being informed that your congregation has much to do with the trustees of that fund, I take the liberty of sending the petition to you, hoping you will be so kind as to get it presented to them, in any way most likely to obtain a favourable answer. The Leek congregation had also something from the Yorkshire fund. I should be glad if you could put me upon any way of applying to them for a continuance of their bounty.

"I regretted very much my absence from this country last summer, when you were here. Is there no hopes of seeing you in the north this year? Surely Mrs. Clayton will pay her sister a visit in Lancashire; the distance from thence to this place is not very great. If such a plan should at any time be formed, I hope you will allow Barnton to come in for a share in it. I beg my best compliments to Mrs. Clayton; and am, reverend sir, with much esteem,

"Your friend and servant in the Lord,

"W. GLENORCHY."

Mr. George Clayton, in his notes on his father's life, says that Dr. Barington, bishop of Durham—who was a lineal descendant of Caryl, one of the first of the ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity, and the learned and elaborate expositor of the book of Job,—displayed his catholic charity by occasionally writing letters of recommendation to the Congregational Fund Board, on behalf of poor and afflicted dissenting ministers residing in his diocese. Of these letters, one, at least, remains in the archives of the Society, with the signature of Dunelm. His recommendation was cordially acceded to,—as it was always, on behalf of worthy and devoted men.

As time rolled on, Mr. Clayton's ministrations became increasingly attractive, and his friendships, among the people of his charge, more intimately cemented. In truth, he won the respect, affection, and confidence of those among whom he lived and laboured, by his faithful and fearless proclamation of a full and free salvation; by his agreeable manners, his devotional spirit, and his dignified and consistent deportment. His elders or deacons, men of the old school, showed a warm attachment to his person and ministry, and exerted themselves to the utmost to promote the comfort of the pastor, and the prosperity of the church.

The names of Mr. Ewen, Mr. Hanson, Mr. Leathley, Mr. Dyson, Mr. Knowlys, and Mr. Ogden, are still remembered, by their remote descendants in the church, with honour and reverence, as those who served their generation according to the will of God, ere they fell asleep, and were gathered to their fathers. Of the gentleman first mentioned, it may be remarked that he was so sensitively conscientious, in the discharge of his official duties at the Weighhouse, that he was never absent from town, on the days when the Lord's supper was administered, and when he was expected to assist in the distribution of the elements. His London residence was in Lincoln's Inn Fields; but, having a house and property in the town of Ipswich, he passed the summer months there; yet, so intent was he upon duly filling his place in the sanctuary of God, that he regularly travelled by postchaise, once in every month, and returned in the same manner, that he might be present, together with his pastor and the brethren, at the table of the Lord. The length and the expense of the journey (and travelling was not then what it is now) did not deter him from what he, at least, deemed to be a matter of Christian obligation. How differently do many church officers of modern times think and act on these occasions! often regarding their worldly journeyings, and other engagements, as of far more importance than any duties which their place and station in the church devolves upon them.

Many of the *members* of our churches, as well as others in the congregation, would do well to ponder this incident in the religious life of Mr. Ewen; and ask if it does not somewhat rebuke the habit into which, of late, numbers have fallen, of contenting themselves with a solitary morning attendance at the house of God, on the Sabbath; the rest of the day being spent in the indulgences of the table, in seeking the charms of music, or in a social intercourse, which too rarely assumes the character of the conversation that won, for the disciples going to Emmaus, the notice and sympathy of the Divine Master, and which too frequently degenerates into mere gossip, or worldly talk, that no more promotes the intellectual than the spiritual welfare of parents or children. There is something radically wrong in all this; and the watchmen on the walls of Zion will do well to blow the warning trumpet, with an unmistakable sound; or the assumed difference between the church and the congregation will speedily vanish away, as an ecclesiastical delusion.

While Mr. Clayton resided in London, at the commencement of his ministry, he was regular in his attendance at the weekly social prayer-meetings. Here, however, certain difficulties beset his path. Among the numerous accessions to the church was a worthy man, a stonemason by trade, who had, or fancied he had, the gift of public speaking; and, not content with taking his turn in prayer, thought fit, when the pastor chanced to be absent, to exercise his talent in expounding the Scriptures, and exhorting his brethren. They, however, did not very much relish his spontaneous effusions, although he evidently took much pleasure in hearing the sound of his own voice. Some of the people complained to the minister of what they considered an irregularity, and he considered how he might best meet it.

On a certain evening he entered the vestry, a few minutes after the time for the commencement of Divine service. At that moment the forward brother was opening the Bible, to expound its contents; when his pastor said before all, in a tone of mingled mildness and firmness, "My good sir, I wish you to understand that there will be no public teaching in this place of worship, excepting by express invitation from myself, until I have an assistant regularly appointed by a vote of the majority of church members."

Thus he put down a disorderly movement which, if unchecked, might have led to confusion and dissension in the house of God. While he was an advocate for Christian liberty, he was, through his entire course, as strenuous a supporter of Christian order. In a short time the preaching brother withdrew from the Weigh-house, and united himself with a body of Sandemanians, to whom his gifts were, probably, more acceptable.

Among the families whom Mr. Clayton visited was that of Mr. George Flower, a merchant in Cannon Street, in the city, who had recently departed this life, leaving his widow and five children, two daughters and three sons. A letter addressed to Mrs. Flower, on the occasion of her husband's death, by the Rev. Augustus

Toplady, will be read with interest, as both showing the Christian sympathy of that well-known clergyman with a sister in affliction, and as being among the latest of Mr. Toplady's correspondence—for he died in the summer of the same year.

"DEAR MADAM,—Knowing that the officious zeal of numerous visitants, however well meant, often occasions more trouble than relief, during the first impressions that result from so trying a dispensation as that under which God is now exercising you; I, for this reason, waive presenting you with my personal condolences, and request yourself, and your amiable family, to accept my written respects.

"You and yours are deeply on my heart, before the mercy-seat. Has the Holy Spirit yet brought you to that point, to which faith invariably tends, and in which it will always ultimately rest, viz., 'It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth Him good'? That your husband's God is and will be *your* God, even to the end, and without end, I believe, with the fullest assurance. May He, likewise, be the God of all your offspring! It is a great, an unspeakably great thing, to be *born again.* How far that most momentous work has taken place on their souls, I know not. But may they ever tread in the religious footsteps of their deservedly-honoured father; and never forget that the same blessed and triumphant consolations which (I am informed) enlivened *his* last hours, will also felicitate *their* lives, and brighten *their* deaths, if effectual grace render them partakers of like precious faith with him in the righteousness of our God and Saviour.

"The presence of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Remember that your Maker is your husband: a husband who never dies, and who changes not.

"My kindest and most sympathizing respects attend the two young ladies, and both the gentlemen. Adieu, till I have an opportunity of assuring you, by word of mouth, how much I am dear Mrs. Flower's affectionate and inviolable friend,

"AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

"KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *Feb.* 20*th*, 1778."

Mrs. Flower's maiden name was Fuller. She was one of the sisters of the late William Fuller, Esq., of Lombard Street, and Ponders End, banker, and of Richard Fuller, of Cornhill, and of the Rookery, near Dorking, who was likewise a banker. These two gentlemen belonged to a family of ten children, who resided with their parents at Fitzharris, in Berkshire, whence they migrated, at an early period of life, to London. They were the architects of their own fortunes; and by great diligence, frugality, and perseverance, laid the foundation of large and flourishing houses, to which they bequeathed their abundant wealth.

The parents at Fitzharris were persons of eminent piety, of the puritanical class, as also were some correlative branches of the family at Aston, in Berkshire, and its neighbourhood; all of them staunch Nonconformists, and bright exemplars of primitive Christianity, who walked with God themselves, and laboured to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Mr. Richard Fuller died at the age of sixty-nine. His brother William long survived him; enjoying a hale old age, accompanied by extraordinary activity, and exemption from the infirmities usually attendant on advanced life. He died at Ponders End, in his ninety-fifth year, after a short illness, resulting from cold caught in riding from London to his country house. While he yet lived he built and endowed several almshouses in Hoxton, and transferred at different times to the Congregational Fund Board, for the relief of poor ministers of the Gospel, and the education of students for the ministry, the munificent sum of £33,400. He held fast the profession of his faith without wavering, even to the end of his protracted existence here, nor forsook the good old way in which his pious forefathers walked.

In visiting at the house of Mrs. Flower, Mr. Clayton found himself in an atmosphere of intelligence, mental culture, and vital religion. There he met occasionally the Rev. Mr. Hitchen, of White's Row chapel, Spitalfields, the pastor of the family. There, too, he had opportunities of seeing and conversing with the Rev. W. Romaine, his spiritual father; the Rev. Augustus Toplady, the Rev. J. Martin, pastor of Keppel Street chapel, the Rev. S. Olding, of Deptford, and other ministers of note and standing, both of the clergy and the nonconforming ministry. It is delightful to look back upon this remote day, when prejudice was rife, and party spirit ran high, and recognize, in the friendly associations of these godly ministers, an intercourse so catholic and Christian as to reflect honour upon their common Master, and illustrate one of His most emphatic declarations, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The late Mr. Flower was one of the deacons of White's Row chapel, and filled his office well, so as "to purchase to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the faith of Christ." His religion, however, was lowly and unostentatious, and discovered itself mainly in his private walk with God, and his diligent cultivation of the minds and habits of his numerous family. He was blessed with no fewer than eleven children, whom he carefully instructed; ever accompanying his instructions with fervent prayer.

To the daughters of this house—both of them endued with superior intelligence, a fondness for reading, a talent for conversation and correspondence, various female accomplishments, and decided Christianity,—Mr. Clayton was soon drawn, in sentiments of esteem and friendship. Towards the elder sister he began to feel something more than friendship; and though aware that there was some disparity in their years—she having been born in 1746 and he in 1754,—and still greater disparity in their outward circumstances, he, nevertheless, after committing the important matter, by frequent and earnest prayer, to Him who overrules all human concerns, and setteth the solitary in families, offered himself to the acceptance of the lady. At first she hesitated, and then declined his advances; assigning as her principal objection, the difference in their respective ages. Thus discouraged, he bethought himself that if this were the main obstacle, he was not left altogether without hope of success; and so set himself vigorously to combat the misgivings indicated on that ground, and ultimately triumphed.

There were yet other difficulties in his path. The mother was averse to the match; and for awhile opposed herself to the mutual wishes of the parties more immediately concerned. She avowed that she saw much to applaud in the young minister, but that his want of fortune would be a barrier, in her judgment, to the desired alliance. The good old lady accompanied her statement of objections with the usual arguments in such cases, and concluded by dropping some unpleasant remarks as to her daughter's "throwing herself away upon a penniless parson;" words which created much pain at the moment, and were never wholly forgotten. Some branches of the family also sympathized in these views of their parent. They were not, however, entirely correct; for the young pastor was in the receipt of a respectable income from his charge, and was living in the affections of numerous friends, who were both able and willing to pledge themselves to assist him, in any reasonable measures for promoting his success and advancement.

Time and patience eventually softened objections, and Mr. Clayton received his bride with her mother's consent; their union being solemnized by the Rev. W. Romaine, at the parish church, in the month of July, 1779.

The young couple settled down in Highbury Place, Islington, in a house which had never been tenanted, and which they purchased as their future residence. Here they found a happy home, under the smiles of providence and grace; and here they lived for forty years,—a period comprising the most interesting events of their lives,—without any change of local habitation. Congratulations, by visitors and letters, poured in upon them in great profusion; most of them exhibiting the religious character of the circles in which they had severally moved. Lady Huntingdon appears to have kept silence on the occasion; for she had not yet got over the separation of Mr. Clayton from her Connexion; but subsequent to this her correspondence with him, which will appear in its proper place, proved the sincerity of her regard for her former student.

Chapter VII.

1779–1784.

DOMESTIC AND PASTORAL ARRANGEMENTS. — STUDIOUS HABITS. — OLD DIVINES. — PULPIT PREPARATIONS. — ORDERLY DISTRIBUTION OF TIME. — PUNCTUALITY. — BIRTH OF HIS FIRSTBORN. — INFANT BAPTISM. — PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY. — BIRTH OF HIS SECOND AND THIRD SONS. — ECLECTIC SOCIETY. — LETTER FROM REV. JOHN NEWTON. — EFFORTS OF USEFULNESS.

We have now to contemplate the subject of this memoir in a new light, not only as the pastor of a Christian people, in his stated ministrations amongst them, from Sabbath to Sabbath, but as the head and master of a family; seriously concerned to walk before God within his house, with a perfect heart, and to give, in his domestic relations, an example to the flock. He first of all dedicated his dwelling, in solemn acts of devotion, to the God of the families of the earth. Having set up his tent, "he reared his altar, and called on the name of the Lord." Those, and they were many, who frequented his habitation in succeeding years, whether as transient visitors, or more settled inmates, could have no difficulty in admitting that 29, Highbury Place, was indeed a consecrated abode.

One day in the week (Friday) was set apart to receive friends or strangers, who might desire to see and to hold conversation with the pastor of the Weighhouse; and they were on that day cordially welcomed, and hospitably entertained. This regulation was made that the other days of the week might not be needlessly broken in upon, and that domestic affairs, the plans of the study, preparation for the pulpit, and pastoral visitation, might receive an uninterrupted attention.

The young minister deeply felt the solemn responsibility of his position, and was anxious to "do the work of an evangelist," proving himself to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He was fully aware of the inadequacy of his preparatory educational course, in many important respects. He judged that it was too superficial and too limited; and had been likewise too much abridged by early public labours, to be as available to him as he could have desired;—placed, as he was, in the heart of a great city, and called to supply spiritual aliment to an intelligent and now numerous auditory, week after week; while he was also surrounded by fellow-labourers, of learning, years, experience, and long standing in the churches of Christ. He therefore set himself, in dependence upon better strength than his own, resolutely to remedy, as best he might, the defects of which he was conscious.

He was ambitious to become a sound divine, "a scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." With this view, he secluded himself, that he might seek and intermeddle with all kinds of knowledge, and more especially with that which might be of most service to him in the discharge of his sacred duties. He deliberately formed his scheme of self-improvement, and inflexibly adhered to it. In the first seven years of his married life he was found in his study at five o'clock, both summer and winter, and thus secured three hours daily, before he met his household, for reading, meditation, and prayer. The constancy of the habit of rising betimes was greatly facilitated by the prudent arrangements of the mistress of his family, aided and carried out by an excellent domestic, whose activity, early hours, and punctuality, enabled him to pursue his studies, even in the depth of winter, without hindrance. It was in these hours that he sat at the feet of those great teachers, whose names and writings are of imperishable renown. He believed in the necessity of human as well as divine teaching;—one instrumental, the other efficacious,—"that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." He made himself familiar—not by hasty glances, not by skimming the surface, but by diligent and attentive perusal—with the writings of Owen, Charnock, Bates, Manton, Howe, Baxter, Goodwin, Watts, and Doddridge; together with the Bostons and Erskines of Scotland, and some of the most celebrated divines of New England. These were his companions, while other men slept; and he found that intercourse with them enriched his understanding and warmed his heart.

It was in these hours, too, that he made a study of the *Assembly's Catechism*, both the Shorter and the Larger, and derived therefrom, as he often acknowledged in after years, the most valuable light and the most important benefit. This compendium of sound doctrine gave unity, compactness, and order to his theological sentiments. He always regarded it as a cincture to the loins of the mind, giving strength and tone to his own apprehensions and convictions. It was this view of things which led him, in subsequent years, to present to each of his three sons a copy of Fisher and Erskine's *Catechism*, on entering upon their divinity course; with his earnest recommendation and entreaty that they would give to it their best attention. He regarded it as containing the truths of the Bible in a condensed form; not so much a human standard of faith as the divine standard of Holy Scripture, compressed into a systematic order, for the help of the memory, and well adapted for practical use, on every suitable occasion, or controversial emergency. So strongly was this conviction embedded in his mind, that in his old age he was often heard to say that—after an observation, and not a careless one, of men and things, for half a century—he had never known an instance of one thoroughly grounded in the *Assembly's Catechism*, either among ministers or private Christians, who had turned aside into the paths of error.

Although he read much and thought much, he was not in the habit of writing much. He kept a common-place book; and made extracts of such passages as appeared striking, and which he wished to review at leisure, and to make his own. He was, however, no plagiarist, and adopted no human teacher for an oracle. "Take the thoughts of other men," he would say; "digest them, and make them your own; incorporate them with your mental constitution, and you will give them forth with freshness, with ease, and with variety. You may borrow other men's spectacles, but always see with your own eyes." To this may be attributed the originality which marks many of his pulpit addresses.

His plan of preparation for his public discourses was, carefully to write the ideas of the sermon, and to clothe many of them with appropriate language, in entire sentences or paragraphs; whilst others were simply noted down, and left to an extemporaneous utterance. He seldom took his notes into the pulpit, but used a slip of paper with a brief syllabus of the heads and particulars, and Scripture references, by way of aid to his memory; which faculty, whether arising from his mental structure, or the neglect of early exercise, he did not think to be very tenacious. Through his whole life he had a very qualified estimate of his powers of recollection.

His anxiety to make due preparation for the Sabbath sermons, at times amounted to nervousness. He was not at ease, unless he could fix on his texts for the Sabbath on the preceding Monday. Tuesday was spent in the city, in pastoral visitation; the texts occupying his thoughts, as he walked or rode, and in the intervals of various engagements. On Wednesday he sat down to write, and excogitate upon the selected topics; and finished everything by noon on Friday, the day allotted to receive his friends. He uniformly gave Saturday to healthful bodily excursions, a ride or drive into the country, or a walk with his children, together with light reading, until the hour of six; when, after an early tea, he retired for what he was wont to call "the preparation of the heart" for the public service; working the subjects into his mind, and accompanying the operation with fervent prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, both upon the teacher and the hearers.

These habits, pursued with undeviating regularity, in process of time became a second nature; and among those who were intimately conversant with him it was generally understood, that the orderly distribution of one week was but the type and pattern of every week, throughout the year, and that for more than forty years together. Attachment to order was indeed one of the leading characteristics of his mind, and formed, in his opinion, a great point of moral duty. Yet he did not regard it as of itself an end, but only as a means to an end; judging that without it a man could not serve God acceptably, in guiding his family, or bearing rule in the church; nor be of much utility to his fellow-men.

His punctuality was exact, and his attention to time and seasons remarkable. In the religious ordering of his household, those who formed it can attest that they scarcely knew an instance of the deviation of two minutes from the hour of eight, for the morning service, and nine, for evening prayers. As the clock struck the bell rang. Although in the course of time his engagements multiplied, and he was frequently in town, in the fulfilment of his pastoral visits and public duties, yet he records the fact that he never heard the clock strike the hour of nine, in London, for the space of thirty years together. By careful management and fixed resolution, he secured the inviolability of his hours; which, considering that his residence was three miles from the city, required no small effort, and deserves to be considered no unenviable achievement. By this means he was never hurried, never in a bustle; but moved on in his appointed course with a calm and unruffled dignity. By some he might have been regarded as too rigid a disciplinarian; but his children and servants, when once thoroughly initiated into his system, did not find it difficult to comply; and the yoke became easy, the burden light.

On the 13th of May, 1780, a year memorable for the riots of London, his eldest son was born into the world; a strong, healthful, and promising child, who, after one month, was solemnly dedicated, by his father's hands, in the ordinance of baptism, to the triune Jehovah, in the face of the congregation at the Weighhouse. On this occasion he preached on the subject of infant baptism. He was ever a warm advocate of the right of infants to this ordinance, and took especial delight in its administration; having, after patient investigation, much reading, and diligent search of Holy Scripture, satisfied himself that the rite is of divine institution, and intimately connected with personal, domestic, and public religion. If he erred, as some will think he did, in this particular, he certainly erred with the sanction of his reason, his convictions, and his conscience. These convictions, and the practice to which they led, constituted a characteristic feature of the man; and his zeal for the infant race, in maintaining what he regarded as their indefeasible right and inalienable privilege, formed a leading trait of his religious portraiture.

As might be expected, he often conversed with his own children on this subject, and urged them with much solemnity, tenderness, and impressive force, to make the surrender of themselves to God, by a personal profession of Christianity—reminding them that they had already been brought under covenant engagements to be the Lord's, by their baptism; and warned them against the inexcusable sacrilege of taking back the dedicated things, and alienating, in the service of sin, of the world, and of Satan, that to which God has the first, the best, and the everlasting claim.

In conformity with these views, he was continually pouring instruction on religious matters, as well as those of civil and secular concernment, into the minds of his offspring. He endeavoured practically to exemplify the rule given to the Hebrew parent in Deut. vi. 6–9: "These words . . . shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

While his children were yet young, his home-life was literally a vital embodiment of these precepts.

In all that Mr. Clayton taught on this subject, there was an unhesitating certainty, in his matter and manner, which showed at least that he was thoroughly persuaded, in his own mind, on which side truth and fact are found. He chiefly insisted on the practical improvement of the rite, as strengthening the obligations and motives of personal religion, and as eminently calculated to preserve and promote family religion in the world. He believed with Matthew Henry that if infant baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed; and when he heard that it was vaunted, by some of the anti-pædobaptists of the United States, that the practice of infant baptism was fast *dying out*, he observed, "Then personal and family religion, and Christianity itself, will *die out* along with it." Of this, however, he entertained no fear, while the great Shepherd of the sheep lives, to gather the lambs with His arm, and to carry them in His bosom.

Firmly as Mr. Clayton held his opinions on the matter of baptism, he was no bigot, but honoured and loved his anti-pædobaptist brethren, for the sake of those vitally-important and essential truths, in which all are agreed who are taught by the Spirit of God. He was favoured with the friendship of the Rev. Mr. Martin, of Keppel Street, the Rev. John Ryland, of Northampton, the Rev. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, of Battersea, and the Rev. Thomas Burnside; all of whom he entertained at his house, and with whom he maintained Christian love and fellowship, as faithful and honoured servants of the one Master, even Christ.

Both Mr. Clayton and the honoured partner of his joys and cares entered upon this service, of dedicating their child to God, with much premeditation, and in the faith that their prayers would be heard, and their offering accepted. How earnestly they longed for the salvation of their firstborn, let the strong crying and many tears which accompanied this dedication testify, while they pleaded, on his behalf, the ancient promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you." Eventually, their ardent aspirations and brightest hopes on this occasion were, through the grace of God, abundantly fulfilled.

Three years after the birth of his firstborn, on the 9th of April, 1783, Mr. Clayton welcomed a second son, who in like manner was dedicated to the God of his father, by a public baptism at the Weighhouse chapel, and with the same pious feeling as that which marked the former engagement. This child was called George, after the name both of his paternal and maternal grandparents.

It was in the year 1783, that he had the honour and privilege of being chosen a member of the Eclectic Society.

The Rev. J. Newton, of St. Mary, Woolnoth, intimated to Mr. Clayton his election into this fraternity, in the following letter —

"Dear Sir,—I am directed, by the Society to which I have the honour to belong, to inform you, that you were last night unanimously admitted a member with them.

"The pleasure, and I hope profit, which I have received from this institution, and my persuasion that you will enter into the spirit and promote the design of it, prompt me to congratulate both you and the Society on the event of your admission.

"The next meeting will be on Monday, 14th August. The hour four. No tea after half-past four. No admission after six. The penalty of absence (except the plea is approved by the Society), two shillings and sixpence.

"I should be glad to introduce you, but shall probably be out of town; but if you inquire at the bar for Mr. Bacon Foster Cecil, or any member of the Society, you will be ushered into the room, where, if I cannot be present, I wish you all happy together.

"I suppose this will find you returned from Sussex, or that it will not lie long before you return. I shall be glad to hear that the journey has been comfortable and useful to papa and mamma and children, and may peace and blessing dwell with you at Highbury. We join in love. It may not perhaps be quite genteel to desire you to remember me to my two friends in the kitchen; but it is my way, where I have kitchen friends.

"I am, sincerely yours,
"JOHN NEWTON.

"CH. SQUARE, y^e 29*th July*, 1783.

"The Society, that bears no name, and espouses no party, meets at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street."

On the cover of this Mr. Clayton wrote as follows:—"The enclosed is a letter written by the Rev. J. Newton, of fragrant memory in the church of God. My introduction to and connexion with the Eclectic Society, for fifty years, I consider as a singular mercy of a gracious God, it having been highly advantageous to myself, my family, and my congregation.—J. C., *July* 10*th*, 1833."

In this edifying and delightful association he continued for more than sixty years; always esteeming its meetings to be amongst the most favoured seasons for pious intercourse with ministers and private gentlemen, who were wont to assemble for the purpose of devotion, and for converse on subjects of general interest, but more especially such as relate to the Christian ministry. Several MS. volumes, on subjects chiefly theological, and written by Mr. Clayton after these meetings, have been left by him; but none of them contain matters of sufficient importance to justify extracts.*

When Mr. Clayton became a member, he found himself associated with Newton, Foster, Cecil, Scott, Abdy, Basil Wood, among the clergy; and of the laity, Bacon, the sculptor, Charles Grant, Wilberforce, and Eli Bates. At subsequent periods, Hawtrey, the late bishop of Calcutta, C. J. Wilks, William Goode, John Goode, Crowther, Patrick, Jerram, Simons, Simeon of Cambridge, Pratt (senior and junior), Gibbs, John Clayton, George Clayton, Hambleton, Auriol, Cohen, Gibson, Garrard, Garrett, Ryan, Baptist Noel, the honourable Mr. Villiers, the late bishop of Carlisle, with others, joined them. Country visitors took their seats with the Society, and severally contributed their share to the general improvement, and to that spirit of Christian love and harmony, which has never known an interruption from the beginning to the present day.

On the 22nd of July, 1784, a third son was given to Mr. Clayton, who in the first month of his existence gave signs of great bodily weakness, insomuch that his anxious parents, fearful of exposing him to the risk of a public baptism, dedicated him in private to their covenant God, by the hands of their friend, the Rev. Thomas Snell Jones, afterwards Dr. Jones, of Lady Glenorchy's chapel, in Edinburgh, who happened to be visiting at Highbury at the time. The infantine weakness of this babe, who received the name of William, soon disappeared; and he passed through a remarkably healthful childhood and youth, and grew into a manhood of athletic strength and extraordinary power, so that the exertions of which he was capable, in after life, were matter of astonishment to all who witnessed them.

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* A volume has very recently been published by the Rev. W. Pratt, containing papers read at the meetings of this Society, on topics of varied interest, relating to the affairs of the Church and the World.

About this time, Mr. Clayton's health was often seriously interrupted. He was subject to periodical attacks of quinsy in the throat, and to cough,—with great delicacy of the pulmonary organs. On account of these symptoms, the advice of eminent physicians was resorted to, in humble dependence on the Almighty healer. Fordyce, Sandiman, Ford, and especially Letsom, were consulted, who strongly recommended a return to horse exercise, abstinence from public labour, for a season, and leisurely travelling to some remote locality. This advice led him to make several journeys on horseback to Edinburgh; where he was hospitably entertained by Dr. Jones, and frequently occupied his pulpit, to which he was at all times welcomed by the elders and the congregation, who retained, without abatement, the same partiality for his ministrations, which originally led to Lady Glenorchy's invitation to become their pastor.

Leaving home, always with regret, he was wont to travel with a pair of saddle-bags, containing his apparel and other *personels*, with his Greek Testament, and a few other books; and by easy stages performed the distances from Edinburgh and back again, without any feeling of excessive fatigue, and to the obvious renovation of his health. At the inns on the road, he read, meditated, and prayed; sometimes succeeding in his endeavours to bring the host and hostess, the waiters, postillions, and women servants, to join in the last-named exercise, as an act of family devotion. Not unfrequently he employed his leisure, while the animal on which he rode was resting, to write sketches of sermons, which he found of singular service, upon the resumption of his stated labours.

Chapter VIII.

1785–1797.

BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER.—PARENTAL DISCIPLINE.—BIRTH OF HIS LAST CHILD.—FINAL LETTER FROM THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.—LETTER FROM REV. J. NEWTON.—MR. CLAYTON PREACHING AT THE HULKS.—BARRINGTON THE "GENTLEMAN PICKPOCKET."—MR. THORNTON THE PHILANTHROPIST.—LETTER FROM HIM ON MISSIONS TO THE EAST INDIES.—WEIGHHOUSE SCHOOLS.—SECOND LETTER FROM REV. J. NEWTON.—THE MERCHANTS' LECTURE.

ON the 20th of November, 1785, a daughter was born, who, like the two elder sons, was brought to the Weighhouse chapel, and publicly baptized by the hands of her father, and called Mary, after her mother.

As his family increased he was more deeply impressed with the solemn weight of his relative responsibilities, and became anxious to inform his mind—by a diligent study of Holy Scripture, and by consulting the best treatises on the education of children,—with regard to the wisest and fittest methods of dealing with the young, with a view to their civil, moral, and spiritual benefit. Among other works the writings of Hannah More attracted his notice, and that of his excellent companion. They found in them much to approve, and which they resolved to copy,—as far as applicable to their own circumstances,—in training their infant children. The father adopted a system of discipline which some persons might consider rigid and austere, although it was greatly mitigated by the soft and gentle influences of the mother, who, without opposing the strictness of his method, had the talent of throwing into it the tenderness of her gentle spirit; so that the yoke was lined with love, and the little ones were reconciled to bear it. He was wont to say, "While children are in the animal age, you must treat them as animals, and especially in the subduction of their will by the exercise of authority. When the powers of the mind expand, treat them as rationals, and address their understandings and consciences; when they discover the indications of religious feeling, fan the flame, and treat them as friends and as fellow-Christians."

It was at this time Mr. Clayton received the last letter with which he was favoured from the Countess of Huntingdon. The cordiality of its tone; the deep interest she evidently still felt in the progress and prosperity of her *protégé;* the kind of professional dignity with which she inculcates upon him the performance of his ministerial duties, as if he were still one of her students; and the exulting and joyous, Paul-like spirit, in which she refers to the success of the Gospel at Birmingham,—all are thoroughly characteristic of this truly noble old lady, and show the mental and moral elements of her nature to have been unchanged, to the last.

"MY GOOD OLD FRIEND,—I feel myself obliged by your kind remembrance of my students in this place, and by that brotherly spirit evidenced by those books sent to them, and which I was happy to read, as your faithful testimony bore to the sound meaning of the blessed Gospel of our salvation. Your worst enemies are doing you more good than they can easily conceive. Firmness and coolness will end in *that* proof that 'they can do nothing against the truth, but for it;' and so become the means, in God's hands, of stirring you up to faithfulness in that cause which will be your highest honour here, and your crown of rejoicing in the day of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. I most highly approve your charge. Manly steadiness, from true conviction, proves consistency of sense, and stamps an uprightness of character, that claims respect and esteem, even when they will not admit approbation of sentiments. My best wishes and prayers attend you. Our particular situation engages reserve, lest that base and mean aspect of party-making should sully the precious Gospel we are favoured to carry, in simplicity, among the miserable poor and ignorant, who are yet without hope and without God in the world. The Lord—opening *any* door by *their calls*—only for this has the willing services of His favoured messengers; leaving the controverted systems of churches, doctrines, and any less immediate usefulness, to any who may not see the great importance we may of that voice—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,' &c. To approve or condemn is not our point. Panegyric or satire belongs not to truth—the mere effects of those passions the Son of God ever combats with; and thus by justice and truth we only wish or mean to stand or fall. I mention this to prevent any supposed judgment of bigotry or limited approbation that reserve might include by observation; but the interference with good men's labours ever has its unfair effects, and with a bad man's ministry confusions must make us appear but a partaker of his evil deeds. To keep faithful and fruitful in our line of work, with the testimony of real honour to the faithful servants of God, on all occasions, will be our lasting ambition; but experience has proved to me these yet remain few; though, by high profession, there are many that do many things conviction cannot approve; and so leave to Him who only judges righteous judgment. May our blessed Lord yet answer my many prayers that have been put up for you years ago! and among His most precious servants may you stand 'as called, chosen, and found faithful unto death,' by His grace alone; and thus secure that inestimable inheritance of your dear Master's joy. My age is great, and infirmities many; and daily I put the Lord in mind to remember me when He is in His kingdom, and as the morning watcher I wait for my dear Brother's joyful answer, 'This day thou shalt be *with* ME.' You will have the thanks of thirteen or more (if returned home) of the students, and the tutor,—Mr. Williams,—soon. All promise well here at present.

Gracious is the Lord to our poor unworthy labours: the progress of the Gospel is very rapid with us, and much peace and love abide with us; and the Lord yet enables me to try to put a pin in the tabernacles now building for Him. Give me your prayers—for your unworthy, but ever alike faithful, friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON.

"COLLEGE, *February 28th*, 1786.

"I wish you never to go into your pulpit without this testimony wrote on your heart: 'that all *power in heaven* and *on earth* is given into His hands for you, who has proved He has loved you even stronger than death. Thus faith alone must have the victory for you and me, in all we do and all we suffer: of this faith little will be found upon earth. Great news of the Son of God's power, in a new work we have at Birmingham. Thousands attend, and great and mighty things done in the name of the holy child Jesus, I hear by this day's post. Glory be to the Lord our God! Remember me kindly to Crole and your sister."

Mr. Clayton's fifth and last child was born March 27th, 1789, and was publicly baptized by him, and named Jane after her mother's only surviving sister,* married to John Dawson, Esq., of Aldcliffe Hall, near Lancaster.

A mistake as to the time of an intended visit to Highbury Place, followed by an illness in Mr. Clayton's family, about the time when the friends had again fixed to meet, led to the following letter from Mr. Newton.

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* This estimable lady was distinguished by intelligence, by gentleness, by piety, and various mental accomplishments, the fruits of reading, cultivation, and association with many of the wise and good of that day. She loved retirement, and meditation, and prayer, and for many years led a secluded life, passed in domestic duties and devotional exercises; addicted, however, to acts of benevolence and social usefulness, so far as her circumstances and opportunities permitted. She was greatly honoured and beloved by the circle in which she moved. A memoir was published after her decease, which exhibited her character at large, and affords evidence that she was a person of rare excellence, and most deservedly entitled to be ranked with those pious females who have reflected honour upon their age and their country.

It has no date, but was prior to the death of his wife in 1790.

"Dear Sir,—May I say I am sorry for the occasion of your note? Yes! I am allowed to feel for myself, and for my friends. But I am not to sorrow like them who have no hope. It seems we fixed upon the wrong day for meeting at Highbury, and the Lord has in this way corrected our mistakes. But all is well, and shall be well. We must wait His time, and when it comes, we shall see it was the best time.

"You and John and the two servants are ill together! Poor Mrs. Clayton! But bid her be of good courage. He will support and deliver, and we shall yet praise Him.

"My dear joins in love; she is yet poorly, but I am quite recovered, and I hope He will soon restore her likewise.

"I shall be glad to get Utopia [*sic*] again, as soon as I can; and commission Miss Flower to pronounce for me, 'Peace be with you and yours, with me and mine, and with all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity.' Fiat!—Your affectionate friend,

"John Newton.

"*Wednesday morning.*"

Every year, as it passed, witnessed the growing acceptableness of Mr. Clayton's labours, and served to rivet the affections of his flock to their pastor; while they produced, at the same time, a considerable impression on a still wider circle, and commended him to persons not of his own congregation, among whom were men of station and wealth, who favoured him with their patronage and friendship. Among these was the pious philanthropist of Clapham, John Thornton, who often visited Highbury Place, and engaged Mr. Clayton in various services of benevolence and public usefulness. At one time he took him in his carriage to preach to the convicts on board the hulks, at Woolwich. The minister was supported, right and left, by two officers, each holding a carbine in his hand. The text chosen for the occasion was taken from Zechariah ix. 12:

"Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." The doctrine of justification by faith in the Lord Jesus, as the stronghold of the sinner's safety and confidence, formed a prominent topic of the discourse, which was listened to by the prisoners with fixed attention, while good order and becoming reverence were universally observed. It happened that there was then among them a notable thief, a sort of gentleman pickpocket, of the name of Barrington, who, after the service, accosted Mr. Clayton in this manner, "Well, doctor, I see that with you it is *all faith* and *no works*." To which the preacher replied, "Sir, we can have no good works at all, till they are produced by faith in Christ, through the participation of His life-giving Spirit; and I confess that the very last place in which I should have expected to find the merit of works pleaded would be his Majesty's hulks for convicted felons."

Mr. Clayton often adverted to this fact, in after life, as affording a demonstration that man is under the violated covenant of works; and that even in the most humiliating and degraded position of crime and shame, he vainly clings to his own doings, as the ground of his hope before God.

Mr. Thornton occasionally heard Mr. Clayton at the Weighhouse, and other places, although himself an attached member of the Established Church; and often made him the almoner of his bounty to poor ministers of the Gospel, students for the ministry, and private Christians in distress. Through the medium of this gentleman he was introduced to the acquaintance of Mr. Wilberforce, and the three sons of Mr. Thornton, Messrs. Samuel, Henry, and Robert, who were nearly his own age, and with whom he enjoyed a friendly intercourse, which was sought to be improved for the purpose of confirming their educational principles, their devout habits and consistent practice.

Those who are acquainted with the history of modern missions will remember the pertinacious opposition that was shown by the East India Company, against the introduction of the Gospel to that part of the world. The accompanying letter from Mr. Thornton will show his sympathy with the movements of evangelical Christians, and his desire that those movements should be regulated by prudence and caution, in dealing with those "whose only care was to increase their store."

"BATTERSEA RISE, *Monday morning, 9th Jan.*, 1797.

"DEAR SIR,—Though so much a stranger to you as not to have had the pleasure of seeing you for some years, I am about to take a liberty with you, by which I am afraid I may put you to some inconvenience and trouble.

"I understand that there is to be a meeting to-morrow of the dissenting clergymen in the metropolis, for the purpose of considering of an application, either to the directors of the India Company, or to some other quarter, in favour of sending some missionaries to the East Indies. It is a subject with which both I and Mr. Wilberforce, who is here with me, are very familiar, and in which we feel deeply interested. We are of opinion, however, that in order to bring about in any measure the adoption of any scheme of this sort, great prudence, as to the manner of application, is necessary.

"Mr. Haldane, from whose zeal I understand the present measure originates, has been often with me and Mr. Wilberforce upon it, and also with my neighbour, Mr. Grant; and from this cause, as well as from the interest we had previously taken in the general subject, we happen to be a good deal informed, as I conceive, about the object of your deliberations to-morrow.

"What I take the liberty, therefore, of observing is, that if without too much inconvenience you can come down to us here, at any time to-day or to-morrow, previous to the meeting, we shall be glad to converse with you upon it; and I beg you, if you think proper, to bring with you any other dissenting clergyman who is likely to attend the meeting. I am obliged to remain at home to-day on account of indisposition, otherwise I might perhaps have called upon you.—I am, dear sir, your very faithful friend and humble servant,

"HENRY THORNTON.

"In selecting the dissenting clergyman who may accompany you, it may perhaps be as prudent to think of one who is not altogether of your own sentiments in politics; for Mr. Wilberforce and I wish to consider this subject merely in a religious, and not at all in a political light, and also to be understood to do so."

Mrs. Thornton, too, showed much kind regard to Mrs. Clayton, and greatly assisted her in establishing and supporting the Weighhouse Charity School for Girls, which was formed in 1780, and was a favourite object with Mrs. Clayton, during her whole life; for while training most assiduously her own children at home, she was much occupied and interested in the instruction of the children of the poor, in the neglected streets and lanes of the city. To this was added, in a few years, a school for boys, supported by the gentlemen of the congregation. Both the institutions were wisely governed and liberally supported, as long as Mr. Clayton continued to minister in Eastcheap; and it is believed that they continue to flourish to the present day. The schools were watched over with unceasing care and assiduity by their founders, aided in the female department by Mrs. Harding, of Hatcham House, Miss Wilson and Miss Stock, of Highbury Place,—the former of whom was married to Samuel Mills, Esq., late of Russell Square, and the latter to Joseph Watson, Esq., who, for more than fifty years, honourably and usefully filled the office of deacon in the church of the Weighhouse; and in the boys' school, by the Messrs. T. W. Adam, and his brother Benjamin, and Messrs. Dyson, Dawson, Piper, Birkett, Joseph Wilson, Roberts, and others, whose names are still fragrant, in connexion with that ancient church. When many years had elapsed from the time of the formation of the schools, Mrs. Clayton wrote of them with an undiminished interest, and to her latest hour never failed to manifest an ardent affection towards them. An abundant reward followed this labour of love; as few similar institutions have supplied a larger number of respectable household servants, of steady apprentices, and honourable tradesmen or mechanics.

It was on the occasion of the dangerous illness of Mrs. Clayton, in 1791, that her husband received the following beautiful and characteristic letter from the Rev. John Newton:—

"My dear Brother Eclectic,—When I am abroad, not being able to write to all whom I love, I am obliged to make some selection. I usually give the preference to the afflicted. Others must wait till they are served. Perhaps I should not have written to you so soon, if at all, had you not been upon this list. But now you have a claim upon me. You are on that post of observation on which I lately stood, and my feelings for my dear Mary (the recollection of which makes me shrink at this moment) have well qualified me to feel for you and Mrs. Clayton. On the other hand, my experience warrants, and perhaps requires me, to encourage you both. I have not only read that the Lord our God is all-sufficient, a very present help in trouble, but I have found Him so. Oh! call upon Him. I can assure you He is a hearer of prayer. Trust Him, and He will make good, yea, exceed your expectations, so far as they are warranted by His Word. You must *feel*, but you need not *fear*. Low as Mrs. Clayton is brought, He is still able to raise her up; and if it be, on the whole, best for you both, He certainly will. He can do a greater thing than this. He can not only enable her to receive her dismission with composure, with thankfulness, with joy, but He can enable you to resign her with equal composure; and while you are keenly sensible of your loss, and of the apparent loss to your dear children, by her removal, He can strengthen you to declare with a firm tone from the pulpit, to the comfort and encouragement of your friends and people, 'He hath done all things well!'

"When I preached my dear's funeral sermon, did He not enable me to tell the auditory, in His heart-searching presence, that, making allowance for the unavoidable emotions of nature, I had no more real, solid regret in thinking of the day of separation, than of the day which first united us? And to this hour, though my wound is still fresh, though she is every minute present to my thoughts; such is the Lord's goodness to me, that I believe my friends have never seen me disconsolate. Blessed be His name, I am satisfied, and have not a wish that things should be otherwise than they are, if a wish could alter them.

"And yet I think no attachment could be stronger than mine. I have no reason to boast of it, for it was excessive and idolatrous. The manner of her removal was well suited and designed to remind me of my folly; to bring my sins to my remembrance, and I trust to humble me for them. But while the Lord chastened, He supported me; and perhaps I never had a clearer sense of His wisdom and goodness, or a more unreserved submission to His will, than when my soul was most harrowed and sore, with sensible anguish.

"But enough in this strain, both for you and myself. I would rather amuse your thoughts a little, than fix them on this painful subject.

"I have seen Cambridge, consequently Cambridge has seen me. I was much at home there. I found the Lord had servants there, both in the colleges and in the town. They expected me to admire their palaces and chapels, and wondered at the indifference with which I surveyed them, or rather glanced my eye over them. But, besides that I am no connoisseur in that way, I had better things to look on. I saw some living temples of the Holy Ghost, which I admired greatly. I could relish their walks and gardens; for there I saw the works of God, to which the puny works of man seem only a foil. I preached twice for brother Simeon, on Sunday, to numerous and attentive auditories. I was favoured with some liberty, and seemed to be heard with acceptance. Surely since the Lord does not put me to shame and silence, nor take His word utterly out of my mouth, as I have well deserved, I ought to bear everything else with cheerfulness. But indeed I have as little to bear as most folks: excepting the body of sin and death, and the absence of her whom I so dearly loved, I have nothing to excite a sigh. I am surrounded at home and abroad with mercies and comforts. I have all things and abound. Praise the Lord, O my soul!

"I write from a village, four miles from Royston, and ten from Cambridge. Here I am most at home of all. Here, besides a hospitable and kind entertainment, I have that perfect retirement which I am naturally fond of. I seemed not cut out for London, by my dispositions; but when the Lord led me thither, he gave me, as it were, a London heart: and since it has become my post of duty, it is become the place of my choice. But I still enjoy the country when I can get at it,—the fields the lanes, the trees, the bushes, the birds, and the lambs, &c. Oh, how calm, how beautiful is everything around me! Such a scene, with a few select friends, would be my choice, were self to choose. But through mercy I am not my own, nor my own chooser. The Lord has chosen well for me. The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place. Now London shall be my country, and I will prefer the bustle of Lombard Street to the bleating of lambs; for there is my charge, and there is my heart.

"Say everything that is affectionate and sympathizing to Mrs. Clayton, in my name; and particularly tell her she is often in my thoughts. If you can attend the Society on Monday, present my duty to Mr. President, and my love to the brethren.

"I return to Cambridge, if the Lord please, on Saturday, and go from thence to Everton, on Tuesday, y^{e} 12th July. Such is my present plan; but the way of man is not in himself. Dear Betsy, who is pretty well, joins in love. Pray for us. Remember me to John, George, and all the rest. Pay them each a kiss on my account.

"May the Lord bless you, and your poor brother Eclectic,

"JOHN NEWTON.

"MILDRETH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, 29*th June*, 1791."

In 1793, Mr. Clayton was chosen to be one of the preachers of the Merchants' Lecture, established, in 1672, at Pinner's Hall, in Broad Street. The first six names on the list were Dr. Bates, Dr. Manton, Dr. Owen, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Howe, and Mr. Alsop. In Mr. Clayton's time it was held in New Broad Street chapel, to which place of worship it had been removed, in 1778.

This lecture was held every Tuesday, throughout the year. The congregations were generally numerous, though varying, in some degree, according to the popularity of the minister. The remuneration of the preachers of those days was liberal, so that the service might be called "The Golden Lecture of the London Nonconformists;" the lecturers dividing upwards of a hundred guineas per annum, besides making an ample provision for rent, pew-openers, firing, and other incidental expenses, including the precentor.*

Mr. Clayton's auditory was amongst the largest;

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* As one of the Merchants' lecturers, at the present time, in association with Messrs. Binney, Martin, Drs. Spence and Raleigh, and Newman Hall, it may be as well to say, that Mr. Clayton and his coadjutors appear to have been more fortunate than their successors, as not one-eighth of the amount he mentions is divided between the preachers now; and that is supplied by a few merchants and friends in the city, who are desirous to keep up a service that has been held for more than two hundred years, and the continuance of which is necessary to the retention of some property, the *entire* proceeds of which the lecturers have the gratification of distributing among poor ministers of the Congregational body.

The lecture is now delivered monthly, and at the Poultry chapel, on the Tuesday after the first Lord's day in the month; and is—as many can testify, who step in for an hour, out of the whirl of city life, to enjoy the religious service then held—an occasion of sweet and hallowed spiritual refreshment, that enables the weary heart to go back again to its cares and toils with renovated strength.

A strong desire has been publicly expressed to make the lecture weekly, as it was at the commencement; and steps, I believe, are at this moment being taken, by those who are interested in the restoration, to accomplish that object. —T. A.

attributable, doubtless, in some measure, to the proximity of the lecture to the residences of many of his own immediate charge, who were disposed to attend, in the hope of hearing again, from his lips, discourses which they had found especially impressive, at their own spiritual home in the Weighhouse.

Business, at the period now referred to, was not quite so exacting of the time and thoughts of the merchants and traders of the metropolis, as to prevent their attendance for an hour (for the service was strictly confined to that length), to listen to those who, like the prophets of old, came forth, from their retirement, into the streets of the city, to bear a message from the Great King, the burden of which was: "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that they that buy be as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD PASSETH AWAY."

Chapter IX.

MR. CLAYTON IN THE FAMILY.

LOVE OF ORDER AND PUNCTUALITY.—HOUR WITH THE CHILDREN.—FAMILY TRAINING.—SABBATHS AT HOME.—HABITS OF INDUSTRY.—FAMILY DISCIPLINE.—EDUCATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.—SCHOOL AT WALLINGFORD.—MRS. SIDDONS.—FIRST BEREAVEMENT IN THE FAMILY.—CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION.

As we have arrived at a period in Mr. Clayton's life, when all its moral and intellectual machinery was in fair and full action, we may now regard him a little more closely, in the several relationships he sustained, in private and public. The high estimate in which he was held by his contemporaries will be found fully justified by this retrospect. In the present chapter he will be contemplated in the Family.

He had pondered well all the qualifications which an inspired apostle had described, as constituting a bishop, —"a good minister of Jesus Christ;" and among them he read that he must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" Deeply imbued with a sense of the solemnity of his position, as well in the paternal as in the ministerial relationship, he sought, as in the sight of God, to fulfil the obligations that rested upon him.

As has been already intimated, a primary feature in his character was the love of order, which pervaded the whole economy of his life. His study was a perfect exemplification of that principle which has been justly described as "heaven's first law." Enter it when you might, you would see his books in their place, his papers neatly arranged; his unanswered letters occupying a drawer set apart for their due preservation; his writing-desk well dusted, and free from ink spots; his hearth well swept; and, in a word, no litters visible, no confusion apparent. This, he was wont to affirm, was perfectly practicable and easy, to a well-regulated mind; and, what he deemed of great moral importance, proved, in the long run, a great saving of time, which, as a precious talent, every Christian is bound to redeem.

From the commencement of the day to its close, order and method reigned in the household. Reference has been made to the regularity with which the devotional exercises of the family were conducted. These, in the morning, scarcely ever exceeded fifteen minutes; as he deemed that amount of time sufficiently long, when little children and servants were to take part in the act of worship.

Breakfast despatched, there immediately followed what might be called the Morning lecture. First, a chapter was read by the children, and briefly commented upon by the father, and illustrated by images and anecdotes level to their capacities. Afterwards selections were made from Watts's *Lyrics*, Cowper's *Poems*, the *Odyssey of Homer*, as versified by that author, Pope's *Iliad*, and the *Dramas* of Hannah More; and the reading of these was interspersed with remarks of a moral and religious character.

Pains were taken to induce habits of reflection; and every encouragement given to the young people, to speak out what they thought, with unrestrained freedom and familiarity. This method of eliciting their own sentiments,—often, doubtless, crude and immature, and even wild,—presented to him an opportunity of correcting what was erroneous, and commending what was sound and true, although it might be imperfectly conceived and expressed.

Mr. Clayton accustomed his children to read to him aloud, and to recite passages of prose or poetry which they had committed to memory. On these occasions he would instruct them in the art of speaking; explaining and exemplifying the several rules of articulation, emphasis, and the modulation of the voice. He advised that they should follow nature in these respects, as opposed to what is merely artificial; believing that in speaking, what is most truly natural would prove most intelligible and agreeable. In these efforts he was much assisted by Mrs. Clayton, who had a voice remarkably gentle, soft, and mellifluous, and who endeavoured to regulate the pronunciation of her children, as to clearness, distinctness, and audibility.

When Mr. Clayton had finished with his children, he went forth either to his study, or some engagement connected with his pastoral and public duties. These occupied the intervals of meals, and were agreeably diversified by recreation, physical and mental, alone or with his family; until the evening of the day brought with it the season for those hallowed exercises, social and secret, with which it appropriately closed.

The hour from eight to nine was, for many years, set apart for the *private* devotions of the family—visitors and servants being included in this arrangement. Each retired to his own room, for the perusal of the Scriptures and prayer; and thus a period was allotted to those duties, before weariness had incapacitated for their efficient discharge; and a sweet preparation was enjoyed for the family exercise which followed. Thrice blessed the household that is thus governed! "Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

While the ordinary occupations of the week thus went on, the Sabbath brought its own special privileges and duties. Public worship having been attended, morning and afternoon, the family re-entered their dwelling; and, like David, the minister "returned to bless his household."

Living in an age when Sunday evening services were comparatively unknown to the Christian church, Mr. Clayton endeavoured sedulously to improve the hours of the day of rest, from six to half-past eight, by private and domestic instruction and fellowship. In these never-to-be-forgotten exercises, the parents, the children, and the servants severally took their part. Hymns or sacred poems were recited; the *Assembly's Catechism* was repeated; the sermons of the day recapitulated; and sometimes themes or essays—composed by the children on Scripture characters, Bible histories, or particular doctrines—were read. Thus very early were they taught, both to think and express their thoughts in their own language; and were happy in having so judicious a critic of these juvenile compositions.

It will naturally be supposed that such a man—deeply impressed with the value of time, and the wisdom and necessity of rightly employing it—would inculcate most strenuously, and most determinately insist upon, the cultivation of habits of industry. An idle drone was his detestation; and his sons were early initiated into the duty of rightly and conscientiously spending every hour.

Even in Eden, with all the exemptions which a condition of innocence secured, "when out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, He took the man whom He had formed, and put him there to *dress* it and to *keep* it." Occupation is one of the necessary and beneficent laws of our being; and the violation of it must entail mischief, if not misery.

Thus Mr. Clayton brought his lads up to a life of industry, and a love of it; and never master had more docile, or more conscientious and successful pupils. It became the habit of their lives to be usefully engaged; and for this they had to thank and venerate their father, whose example was ever a most powerful recommendation of his precepts.

When a large band of French emigrants came to these shores,—driven hither by the revolutionary persecution, with the loss of their possessions, and homes, and means of livelihood,—Mr. Clayton lectured on the duty of preparation, both moral and civil, should such reverses fall to the lot of the people of this country. "See," said he, "the *noblesse* and the clergy of France reduced to penury and want; and many of them compelled to undertake even the most menial offices for a morsel of bread!"

On this ground he enjoined it upon his sons to make themselves acquainted with the nature of the humblest duties of the household; and he himself instructed them in the treatment and management of horses, of which he often found he knew more and better than his own groom. "I trust, my dear lads," he would observe, "that you will never be placed under the necessity of performing these services for your subsistence; but should such reverses betide you, you will not be left in utter ignorance and helplessness, as to the right method of doing them. At all events you will know how things ought to be done, should you have others under you upon whom these labours will devolve. No man is degraded by a knowledge of what belongs to the duties of the humblest servant, or by a humility which can stoop, when requisite, to the most subordinate employments."

He would often remind his little auditory that they were highly privileged children, having advantages above many others, and that it was, at all times, dangerous to stand where others do not. "Watch," he would say, "watch your thoughts, your looks, your words, and your actions, that you may give no just cause of offence on this score;" adding facetiously, "you are decent children, on the whole, if you are kept humble; but remember that 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.'" At the same time he would indicate the wide difference between humility and abjectness; between lowliness and meanness; affirming that dignity of manners, a well-regulated self-respect, and an abhorrence of degrading associations and acts, were no evidences of pride. "Make it your daily prayer," he would say, "'Let not the foot of pride come against me.'"

In the important matter of FAMILY DISCIPLINE—so necessary to be kept up; so difficult to keep up wisely and well, with the preservation of the happy medium between undue laxity and unjust severity—Mr. Clayton sought counsel at the lips of the "God of all the families of Israel," who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

It was a favourite phrase with him that the Bible ought to be the chief magistrate in every house, and the authority whose judgment should be final, in all cases that might arise. He particularly recommended the book of Proverbs; and encouraged those around him to commit to memory portions of that repository of piety, wisdom, and sound morality; and thus to retain its sage counsels for practical purposes, in future life. He often referred to passages of that book, in order to explain those acts of discipline which he felt it his duty to administer. The rod, suitably applied in case of grievous faults, especially when persisted in, after kindly admonition, he regarded to be nothing less than an ordinance of God, for the right training of children. The horsewhip, whose place was the architrave of the door of his study, was seldom used for correction, but often pointed to, as "the silver-headed monitor."

Previously to the exercise of discipline, he would read such texts as the following: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs xiii. 24). "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (ch. xix. 18). Then he would proceed to inflict the incurred punishment.

He never administered correction immediately on the committal of the fault. It was not till several hours after, and, in some cases, days after, that he proceeded to this extremity;—observing that when the Great Father called Adam to account for his sin, it was in "the cool of the day;" and contended that when chastisement was administered in a passion, the good effect was hazarded, if not defeated. "Who," he would ask, "who, in their senses, would give medicine to a child scalding hot?" All this served to create an impression that he was guided by *principle*, and not by *impulse*, in the government of his family.

When the time arrived for the educational efforts of home to be succeeded by school instruction, Mr. Clayton and his valuable coadjutor felt all the anxiety incident to such a crisis. After much deliberation and prayer, they intrusted their eldest son to the tutelage of the Rev. William Kingsbury, at Southampton, who was at that time at the head of an establishment for young gentlemen, at once numerous, respectable, and flourishing. With this choice they had every reason to be satisfied. The pupil improved, and won the approval and affection of the preceptor.

Some time after this, an attempt was made to combine household teaching with school learning; and the three boys were sent, as day scholars, to a large seminary in Islington, where they acquired the rudiments of classical and scientific learning. But the public calls and engagements of the pastor, and the entertainment of visitors, from time to time, at his house, were found to clash with the objects proposed in home education. In fact, after an experiment, patiently extended over two or three years, the plan was relinquished, as incompatible with the duties of the minister, and the desired improvement of the scholars. They were, therefore, again sent from home; and this time were transferred to the care of the Rev. T. Pentecross, Wallingford, in Berkshire,—an evangelical clergyman, and a man of letters.

Although they were, at that time, in constant attendance on the worship of God, as administered according to the rites of the Church of England, Mr. Clayton was of opinion that the advantages of the school, in all other respects, abundantly compensated for a departure from the forms to which they had been previously accustomed.

In thus placing his sons under the care of a clergyman, Mr. Clayton did not escape censure amongst some of his friends and brethren, more rigid than himself in their attachment to their own mode of worship. He did not, however, consider that he was chargeable with any inconsistency, in permitting the greater to take precedence of the less; and maintained on this, as on all other occasions, that modes and forms are but of secondary and subordinate importance, when compared with that which is vital and essential.

While at Wallingford the three youths were occasionally visited by some of Mr. Clayton's personal friends, who were either students or residents at the university of Oxford, and who embraced this opportunity of evincing their respect for the father, by bestowing attentions on his children.

Among other boys at Mr. Pentecross's school was Master Harry Siddons, a son of the celebrated actress of that name. In her occasional visits to see her son, she was kind enough to give readings to the whole school, after the hours of study; and it is easy to conceive how high a treat was thus afforded to the boys, and more especially to those of them whose previous training qualified them to appreciate the rare attainments of that lady, who was a personification of excellence in the art of speaking. The ease and gracefulness of her carriage, the clearness of her enunciation, the music of her voice, the telling precision of her emphasis, the extraordinary adaptation of her look, and the diversified expression of her fine countenance, could not fail to interest, astonish, and gratify her youthful hearers, in a more than ordinary degree; and to prove a valuable study for those who in future life were destined to become public speakers. The pieces which Mrs. Siddons selected for her readings, taken from Shakspeare, Milton, and Addison, were obviously intended to have a moral and religious bearing on the minds and manners of her schoolboy auditors.

As his children grew up into youth, Mr. Clayton and his estimable wife had the joy of seeing the graces of Christian excellence—for whose budding and unfolding they had prayed and watched, from the hour of each child's birth — begin to develop themselves; and, ultimately, as will be seen, their three sons, after having united themselves to the church, followed their father's example, and entered upon the ministry; while their two daughters also made choice of the service of Christ, and sought in such quiet and retired walks of Christian usefulness, as were suited to their sex, to honour the profession they had made.

But while the young men, to the great joy of their parents, were engaged in preparatory studies, an insidious foe was stealing into the happy home circle, and silently laying siege to the life of the youngest of the family. The second daughter, Jane, a lovely and loving girl, fell into a state of delicate health, which ofttimes filled the parental hearts with many sad forebodings. All suitable means were resorted to, accompanied with constant and earnest prayer; but, so far as recovery was concerned, all in vain. She continued to decline, as the days passed on; till it became evident that she must soon fall a victim to pulmonary consumption.

For more than six weeks, it was the mournful office of her father to convey her in his arms from her chamber to the parlour, in the morning, and thence again to her own room, at the close of the day. As is often the case, in this particular disease, it was almost a hopeless task to attempt to impress upon her mind, practically and permanently, a sense of physical danger and impending death; although many remarks made by her, on the general frailty of our nature, the necessity of preparation for a coming eternity, and the blessedness of being found in Christ Jesus, pardoned, accepted, and reconciled, left no room for doubt as to the happy state of her mind towards God; which was further confirmed and illustrated by a truly amiable, dutiful, and blameless conversation.

As to the likelihood of a fatal termination to her illness, she continued to the last perfectly insensible to it. To every inquiry after her health by her family and friends, her uniform reply, made in a cheerful tone of voice, was, "Better, better; much better;" thus supplying another proof that "flattery and fatality" appear to be inherent characteristics of the malady under which she suffered.

It was no small trial of her father's firmness, when he felt it his duty to assign to the two sisters separate sleeping-rooms. They had not been parted for a day or a night, during many past years; they were of one heart and one soul, and most tenderly attached to each other; yet it was deemed indispensable that this form of sisterly association should be terminated. Many tears were shed on the occasion; many entreaties were preferred, to reverse the parental decree, but he was inflexible. He often adverted to the cost of this struggle to his own feelings. The conflict was almost more than he could bear.

The beloved patient continued to grow weaker and weaker, till all hope of restoration ceased. She was recommended to try the air of Tunbridge Wells, which, however, evidently disagreed with her; and after a few weeks' sojourn there, she returned home, manifestly much worse. At Highbury, there was a slight abatement of the symptoms, but it was of short continuance.

She then became possessed with the idea that if she were taken to Southend, on the Essex coast, a place she had previously visited and enjoyed, she should certainly recover. She therefore urged a request—though with unaffected deference and submission—that this experiment might be tried. Every one of the family but herself knew how unavailing the expedient must prove, yet her pitying parents resolved to indulge her wishes. A lodging-house was engaged; and when the day came for leaving home, the family were astonished by finding her in the breakfast-room, attired for her journey, and in readiness to undertake it, in spite of her extreme debility. She had actually dressed herself without assistance, and had succeeded in getting down the staircase, by an effort entirely her own. Among numerous other proofs, this feat afforded a striking evidence of the power of a strong excitement, in overcoming the physical difficulties which beset individuals, in peculiar circumstances of disability and infirmity.

Southend was reached in a day; and the invalid expressed her gratification with everything she saw, and her thankfulness for divine protection, and for the parental kindness, which had so fully provided for the accomplishment of her irrepressible desire.

This apparent revival was, however, of short duration. The clouds returned, and became darker and darker, every hour; till in less than a fortnight from the time of her arrival, on Thursday, July 19th, 1804, she breathed her last, supported in the arms of her beloved sister; the delusive hope of recovery apparently not forsaking her even in the article of dissolution. Happily, there were general grounds for the belief that she had departed to be with Christ, although she slipped through the iron gate of death without being conscious of it.

The mind of her father was overwhelmed with grief, on this truly mournful occasion. The strong man was bowed down with his sorrow; and in after years, even when nearly half a century had passed away from the time of this bereavement, he could never advert to it without tearful emotions.

He felt all the tender sorrow, which is so exquisitely expressed by the sweetest of English lyrists:—

"And, oh! the home whence thy bright smile hath parted,
Will it not seem as if the sunny day
Turned from its door away?
While through its chambers wandering, weary hearted,
I languish for thy voice, which past me still
Went like a singing rill?"

but he could add—

"I give thee to thy God—the God that gave thee,
A wellspring of deep gladness, to my heart!
And, precious as thou art,
And pure as dew of Hermon, He shall have thee—
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled!
And thou shalt be His child."

He aimed to exemplify that submission to the divine will which he had so often inculcated, both privately and in his public ministrations. He sought to improve the event to his surviving children and his household, who sympathized with him in his sorrow, as he wept for his withered gourd, and gazed upon his faded flower

In subsequent periods of his life, he often remarked that, whenever the things of the present world struggled for the ascendency, and attempted to establish a usurped dominion over his affections, two things were found to counteract their influence,—the cross of Christ, and the death of his daughter Jane.

After a short recess from his public work, he returned to his pulpit, and his pastoral duties, with deepened impressions of the evil of sin, as displayed in the mortality of the human race; of the vanity and emptiness of all earthly objects and expectations; of the preciousness of time; of the value of the Gospel of Christ, as the only available relief amidst the afflictions of life, and the desolations of the grave; and of the necessity of instant and habitual readiness for the Lord's coming. It is probable that he never so fully realized, till this crisis in his history, the sentiment expressed in those well-known lines:—

"I preach as though I ne'er should preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

Chapter X.

MR. CLAYTON IN THE PULPIT.

ACCEPTABILITY AS A PREACHER.—EMINENT MEN AMONG HIS HEARERS.—ANECDOTE OF LORD TRURO.—LETTER ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—DR. BUNTING.—CHARACTERISTICS OF MR. CLAYTON'S PREACHING:—ITS STUDIOUSNESS—APPROPRIATENESS—EARNESTNESS—PRAYERFULNESS—SCRIPTURALNESS—FIDELITY.—ANECDOTES: THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE—THE ANGRY HEARER—THE ALARMED HEARER.—SPECIAL INSTANCES OF USEFULNESS: REV. W. ELLIS AND DR. LEIFCHILD—LETTERS FROM THEM.—STUDENTS AND MINISTERS.

At the commencement of the present century Mr. Clayton was in the zenith of his acceptableness and usefulness, as the preacher at the King's Weigh-house, Eastcheap. He had, besides the Merchants' lectureship, to which reference has been already made, one at Fetter Lane, Holborn; and another at Hare Court, Aldersgate Street. For these, as well as for his stated services, he made diligent and prayerful preparation; attracting everywhere a numerous audience, and successfully aiming at the conversion and edification of souls.

Amongst his hearers at home were many of the most respected merchants and magistrates of the city; several members of the legal and medical professions; and a large body of thriving and opulent traders. To these may be added a numerous attendance of the poor, for whose benefit he never failed to let fall some handfuls of the good seed, on purpose.

A modern writer, treating on the causes of decay in Protestant dissenting churches, has mentioned the aristocratical element as having seriously injured Protestant Nonconformity. It is difficult to say where we can look for this element, at the present day; for if it formerly existed among Dissenters, it has almost entirely disappeared. Whatever else may be the cause of the alleged or supposed declension, certainly the one just mentioned is innocent of the charge preferred against it. At the time of which we speak, however, there was certainly something like it in operation; for there might have been counted at the doors of the Weighhouse chapel, from sixteen to twenty equipages, or full-appointed gentlemen's carriages, waiting to convey their owners, after public service, to their respective suburban villages.

Some who have attained the highest legal eminence, sprang from the Weighhouse chapel, under the ministrations of Mr. Clayton; and if they failed to embrace and profess all the principles with which he would fain have imbued them, they were never backward to acknowledge the advantages they reaped from their early attendance on his ministry. Among these were Mr. Pollett, the late recorder of London; Mr. Knowlys, whose generous and excellent father was a member of the Weighhouse, from the commencement of Mr. Clayton's pastorate, till the period of his own decease; and the late Lord Truro, who, while at the bar, was unrivalled in his profession, and whose decisions as a judge commanded general admiration.

An anecdote may here be related of the deceased nobleman. When a young man, and beginning his honourable career, he formed a strong attachment to an amiable and elegant young lady, the daughter of a merchant in the city, and a member of Mr. Clayton's church. His offer as a suitor would have been responded to by the lady, but met with a stern and inflexible opposition from her father, on the ground of the pecuniary inequality that then appeared to him to exist. The young lawyer keenly felt the disappointment, and the lady no less. They both afterwards married: she to an excellent dissenting minister, long settled at C——; and he, in the first instance, to a lady of great worth and amiability, the mother of his children; and, secondly, to Mademoiselle d'Este, the daughter of his royal highness, the late Duke of Sussex. It is well to know, amid the separate and diversified courses of those who were once close friends, that "the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Many years afterwards, in 1826, Mr. Clayton received the following letter from Lord Truro, then known as Mr. Wylde, and as an eminent, rising barrister, who was already giving those indications of forensic learning and oratorical powers, which ultimately raised him to the woolsack. The letter, which was written on the occasion of his mother's death, is alike honourable to the writer and the receiver; and although chronologically out of place, yet may be most fittingly introduced here.

"2, VERULAM BUILDINGS, GRAY'S INN, 26*th Sept.*, 1826.

"DEAR SIR,—When I look back upon the many years, during which I have ever entertained towards you great personal interest and respect; and when, on the present occasion, I am more particularly urged to the remembrance of that high regard and respectful friendship my mother was, at all times, so glad and proud to acknowledge,—as, for a still longer period, subsisting between yourself and her,—I become indeed as fervent as sincere, in the expression of my earnest hope, that the blessings of Heaven may have continued to rest upon you and yours! A long interval has intervened since I have been allowed the satisfaction of any personal communication with yourself, or family; during which I still had the gratification of learning, from my good mother, that you yet favoured her with your friendly notice and remembrance. This consciousness, believe me, was a source of no little pleasure and relief to her, during her last days. Yes, sir, 'tis even so. Those last days have passed away, and my mother rests for ever in peace; nay, rather, has risen, I trust, to the inheritance of eternal happiness.

"You are aware, I rather think, how infirm of late my poor mother had become. When I returned home from New South Wales, nearly a twelvemonth since, she had just paid the last visits to my brothers her state of weakness, as to the joints, ever allowed of. She was not otherwise afflicted with illness, even to the last hour,—which apoplexy brought on, most unexpectedly. I had been with her at Bayswater, the day before, and had conversed with her on some subjects of interest, and was not prepared at all for the report of the following day, that from natural sleep she had fallen into that, from which the voice of her Creator could alone arouse her. In the memoranda, found in her handwriting, and dated three or four years back, she requests particularly of her sons to present you, sir, with a trifling souvenir. As the memorial of the affectionate respect she so long and so ardently bore towards you, her sons hope you will, on that account, condescend to accept it,—although only a mourning ring—to the memory of one, of whom you were so long the faithful pastor, and most valued friend. We would have ventured at once to forward it; but that we must request your assistance as to the size—and in this respect shall be much gratified, if you will have it conveyed, at your convenience, to Messrs. Weatherley and Son, silversmiths, &c., Poultry, who have the family order on the occasion.

"Hoping that many peaceful years still remain to you on earth, and that the decline of life may be softened down with the blessed serenity of the highest Christian confidence, believe me to remain, reverend and dear sir, yours very truly and respectfully,

"JNO. WYLDE.

"THE REV. JOHN CLAYTON, Weighhouse Meeting."

He often found among his hearers ministers of other denominations, as well as those of his own, and not infrequently clergymen of the Established Church. With some of these he was drawn into acquaintanceship, by their entering the vestry, after the conclusion of the public service, to make their acknowledgments, for the instruction and edification they had gained from his discourses. In several instances these casual introductions ripened into warm and lasting friendships. In the biography of the late Dr. Bunting, there occurs the following passage :—

"A.D., 1803.

"We found, however, several friends, one of whom, Miss ——, a very young, but very sermon-loving lady, I was glad to accompany to Eastcheap chapel, to hear Mr. Clayton.

"I had heard, from good judges, the highest character of Mr. Clayton's talents, as a preacher; and I was not disappointed. There is something wonderfully pleasing to me in his manner. It is easy, serious, dignified, and highly impressive. His elocution is animated and manly; but very different from the florid, tinsel oratory, which distinguishes many of those who are called popular preachers.

"Mr. Clayton is popular, indeed, but not among the populace. In his matter, to-day, there was nothing new or uncommon. The subject was the duty of confidence in God, in the present perilous times. But anything said by Mr. Clayton is said so well, as to become striking and interesting. I am more and more convinced that my character, in the pulpit, is too much that of a declaimer, and too little that of a Christian preacher; but 'Rome was not built in a day.' I must try to be more weighty and solid.

"Mr. Clayton is, as a parent, highly honoured of God. He has two sons already in the ministry, and another at Hoxton academy, who is likely to be as great an honour to it, as his brothers and father. After all, I like our own system and people best. If others have more brilliant displays of talent in their assemblies, I think we have, in general, most of the spirit of true and lively devotion.

"With the son then at the academy, the Rev. John Clayton,* who, since 1803, has commenced and completed a ministerial course of great honour and success, for which he still lives to be grateful, my father afterwards formed a cordial friendship.

"The three brothers have all been known as refined English gentlemen, effective preachers, and devout and catholic Christians; of a school which, by its steadfast loyalty to the old theology, and to those essential principles of Protestant Nonconformity which modern politics have, perhaps, tended somewhat to obscure, long retained the Puritan hold upon the middle order of society in this country." †

Mr. Clayton's ministry, whether statedly, in his own pulpit, or occasionally, in other places, was, by the divine blessing, made eminently successful, in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of those who through grace had believed.

His preaching was characterized by the compass and variety of its subjects; by its adaptation to passing events and occurrences; by accurate discrimination of the states and characters of his hearers; by warm affection, tender sympathy, and impassioned expostulation; and by an obvious concern to give to all classes their portion in due season. His manner was grave, but not dull; familiar, but not colloquial; plain, but never coarse; pointed, without being personal; and in no instance, that can be remembered, anecdotal, or approaching to wit or drollery. He was fond of the line of the poet Cowper—

"'Tis pitiful to court a grin, rather than woo a soul."

Men widely differ as to their mental constitution. Some have a vein of humour, which runs through all they think, or speak, or write; while others are more prosodial, and are little troubled with flashes of genius. Of the former class was the late Rev. Rowland Hill, whose mind appeared to have been cast in a most humorous mould, which was sufficiently apparent in his preaching and writings. Whenever his sallies of wit displayed themselves in his sermons, so as to excite the risibility of his audience, he has been heard to lament it; alleging that he neither studied, nor allowed them; but that they would come forth in spite of his every effort to repress them. On all occasions, whether private or public, he was full of merry conceits, some of which, it is well known, were overruled for the highest good of his hearers; of whom not a few—at first attracted and possibly amused by his oddities—were afterwards led to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, and in all seriousness to devote themselves to His service and glory.*

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* This is a mistake: it was William, who was, at the period referred to, studying at Hoxton.

† The *Life of Dr. Bunting*, by his son, T. P. Bunting, p. 194.

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* I am here reminded of two anecdotes of Mr. Hill, which, as far as I know, have never yet been published.

As he was going into Surrey chapel, one Sunday morning, he passed two lads, one of whom said to his companion, "Let's go and hear Rowland Hill, and have some fun." The old gentleman went inside the porch, just before the boys, and gave directions to the verger to put them in a certain pew, in front of the pulpit, and fasten the door. This was done.

After the prayers were finished, Mr. Hill rose, and gave out his text, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm ix. 17); and looking full in the face of the two youths, who sat immediately before him, he said, significantly, "and there's fun for you."

The congregation, somewhat familiar with the old man's oddities, felt sure that he had a special reason for this strange remark; and when, each time he repeated the text, this singular commentary instantly followed, all looked to see in what direction his glance was turned; and the two lads soon found themselves the observed of all the people.

The tremor and alarm with which they heard the words, that reminded them of their design on coming, that morning, to Surrey chapel, were not diminished when they saw every eye fixed upon them, whichever way they looked; and conscience, "which doth make cowards of us all," wrought so powerfully,—in conjunction with the force of God's truth, which Mr. Hill kept enunciating, in the illustration of his text,—that one of them fainted away, and had to be

Mr. Clayton's mental structure was differently framed: he was at all times grave, though not to the exclusion of cheerfulness, which he cherished and exemplified, in conversation with his family and friends, as a general habit. In the pulpit, however, there was a dignified sedateness, and an unaffected solemnity.

Of his ministry it may be truly said it was a *studious service.* His manuscript sermons indicate thought, reading, and care. Of these, after having destroyed many before his death, a few remain, which embody the chief ideas that form the substratum of the discourse, arranged with a due regard to what was a favourite phrase of his—the "*lucidus ordo,*"—and clothed in language, original and striking, though not marked by elaborate composition, and much less by flowery diction. These ideas were wrought into his mind by a process of

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carried out by his companion. The latter remained comparatively unaffected, except with a temporary feeling of shame.

Mysterious and sovereign are God's ways! The youth who fainted returned, the next Sabbath, to that same place of worship; heard the word with gladness; was brought to the knowledge of the truth; ultimately entered the ministry amongst the Independents; and before he died was chairman of the Congregational Union!

The other lad grew up careless and abandoned; and, if I mistake not, became an outcast from country and friends.

Mr. John Clayton was full of anecdotes of the ministers of his acquaintance; and one, half amusing, half sad, is told of Rowland Hill, and illustrates the readiness and wit with which London working men can sometimes retort, when they receive an unwelcome reproof.

Mr. Hill was one day going down the New Cut, opposite his chapel, and heard a brewer's drayman, who was lowering some barrels, swearing most fearfully. Mr. Hill rebuked him, very solemnly, and said, "Ah, my man, I shall appear as a swift witness against you!"

"Very likely," rejoined the offender; "the biggest rogues always turn king's evidence!"

"What did you say to that?" asked the friend, to whom Mr. Hill related the anecdote.

"What could I say?" replied he. "It was true, though I hope not justly applicable to my case; and it made me resolve to be cautious, when I spoke to such men again, *how* I reproved them."

excogitation, and enunciated extemporaneously—with little reference to his notes—with great readiness of utterance, and with emphatic force.

His ministry was remarkable for its *appropriateness* or adaptation. He brought the truths of the Bible to bear upon passing events; upon important phenomena, both physical and moral; and upon the distinguished persons of his time, whether ministers or laymen, missionaries to the heathen, or labourers in the home field; whether noble or royal, great generals or naval heroes. He would attempt to improve, for the benefit of his congregation, the circumstances of their history, the exploits and achievements for which they were renowned, and more especially their death—the end of all men—which "the living ought to lay to heart."

His ministry was, moreover, characterized by unaffected *earnestness*. He was no pulpit drone; and yet there was nothing of violent gesticulation, or noisy shouting, but an intense ardour, sometimes approaching to vehemence, which bespoke that with him all was reality; that he firmly believed what he uttered; and that his heart was supremely set upon the great ends of his ministration—the conversion and edification of the souls of men.

His was a *courageous* ministry, which never indicated anything like tameness, abjectness, or time-serving pusillanimity. Few persons have been more entirely divested of the "fear of man that bringeth a snare." On the one hand, he knew not to give flattering titles; and, on the other, never shrunk from administering wholesome reprehension, in cases which called for it. He could never cringe to the rich and the great; while he never disdained the holy and humble poor. There were some persons who believed that he carried his conceptions of faithful admonition to an extreme; but in this particular his judgment is with his God.

He obeyed, both publicly and privately, the apostolic exhortation—"Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." Possibly a spice of harshness might sometimes mingle in his reproofs. But if he could not say with Paul, "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with *tears;*" yet he never fell short of the standard of duty, contained in the directions of the same apostle, "warning every man, and teaching every man, with all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." It might have been affirmed of him, at his grave, as of an illustrious Scottish Reformer, "Here lies one who never feared the face of man."

His was, pre-eminently, a *prayerful* ministry. Fervent supplications for the blessing of God always attended the choice of his texts or subjects, the composition of his sermons, their public delivery, and his subsequent review of them. He was wont to remark that, when he had preached his discourses first to his own heart, in his Saturday evening preparation, he invariably preached to the people with greater apparent ease, zest, and power. Another frequent and favourite allusion was made by him to the practice of some farmers, who steep the seed before they sow it. "So," said he, "let our sermons be steeped in prayer." He knew that the treasure of the Gospel is deposited in earthen vessels, but that "the excellency of the power is of God," and the exercise of that power he diligently sought.

A prominent distinction of the Christian ministry, in his view, was this, that it is to be regarded as a TESTIMONY—a testimony for God and His truth, borne before men in order to their illumination, conviction, conversion, and spiritual edification. He believed that every right-minded public teacher stands as a witness-bearer; and is set apart for the express purpose of making a solemn deposition, as in the sight of God, on the great subjects of his teaching; and that, therefore, he should enter the pulpit, not as a logician, a philosopher, an orator, a merely ethical essayist, but as a man of God, charged with a message from the eternal throne, in which the dearest interests and brightest hopes of our fallen race are involved.

This it was which gave so observable a character to his preaching, for seriousness, plainness, earnestness, and certainty. Nothing hypothetical, equivocal, or indecisive, was ever heard from his lips. From a full belief of the vital truths to which he was wont to give utterance, he might say, with the inspired apostle, "We have believed and therefore have we spoken." "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," was with him a favourite maxim, which he kept constantly before him, in the composition and delivery of his sermons.

In his public addresses the trumpet never gave an uncertain sound. All was based upon the Word of God, from which he adduced the proofs of the doctrines which he maintained, the duties he inculcated, and the views of experimental godliness which he illustrated. He was indeed "mighty in the Scriptures." By some persons it was thought that his references to passages of the divine Word were too numerous; and served, in some measure, to burden his own memory, to break the thread of his discourses, and divert, in too great a degree, the attention of his hearers from the theme under consideration. He thought otherwise; as his practice for a long course of years sufficiently demonstrates. If in this particular he verged too much towards one extreme, the opposite is far more to be deprecated; as the absence of Scripture references from any pulpit discourses weakens their force, and robs them of that sacred *imprimatur*, "Thus saith the Lord."

Besides which, he directed and encouraged his hearers to follow him, in the quotations he introduced from the Bible; that they might become acquainted with divine truth, by means of the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and thus be better able to compare spiritual things with spiritual. This view of the matter, moreover, tended greatly to the composure of his own spirit, both in preparing for pulpit services, and in after reflection upon them. "I stand up," he was wont to say, "as a witness for God. While conscious of manifold deficiencies and infirmities, I hope that I have made my deposition clearly, fearlessly, and faithfully; and I leave the results with Him whom I serve in the Gospel of His Son. I am by Him held responsible for my fidelity; but not for the consequences of my labours."

This view, at the same time, raised him above the censures and the applauses of his fellow-men; accounting it a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Hence he was enabled to possess his soul in serenity and patience, when his public deliverances were attacked, either by misrepresentation or avowed hostility.

On no subject did he descant more frequently than on honour and honesty. In the great commercial city where he exercised his ministry, he had, on many occasions, observed, how loosely men talked and acted on these matters; how little they seemed to regard the exhortation of the inspired book, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another;" how, under a profession of piety, too many insinuated themselves into the confidence of others, and then ruthlessly invaded their property, and despoiled them of the means of support. Nothing roused his hallowed indignation more than these deviations from moral probity, issuing often in shameless bankruptcies, by which in various instances he had seen widows reduced to beggary, and orphans to their last crust.

Often would he quote the saying of a distinguished English judge, "that in his opinion for ten cruel creditors, there were a hundred cruel debtors." He especially endeavoured to instil into the minds of his offspring a high-toned sense of moral justice; warning them against the habit of borrowing money of their schoolfellows, their playmates, and each other; and reminding them of the advice of the great and good Judge Hale to his sons, "*Tremble to borrow twopence.*"

He would point out that God, in His providential government, has allotted to every one his own portion of earthly good, which he is at full liberty to use, with moderation, and to improve by every legitimate means; but he strongly denounced the reckless and unmeasured speculations, by which those who concocted them ruined themselves, and involved innocent parties in the wide-spreading desolation. "It is written," he was wont to say, "Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not covet;" and they that will be rich, at all hazards, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Yet could he wisely discriminate particular cases, and challenge sympathy, prayer, and consolation, on behalf of those who, by unforeseen and, on their part, inevitable complications, and a course of untoward events, had become entangled in their secular concerns, and were compelled to invoke the clemency of their creditors, and even to appear in the *Gazette*. Towards these he cherished a feeling of respect and compassion, and offered condolence; at the same time administering to their relief and support, until a brighter day dawned upon them. Nevertheless these exceptive instances detracted nothing from his fixed principles, and his forcible animadversions on this subject.

It was Mr. Clayton's aim to commend himself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God; hence the pointed appeals he was wont to make in the distribution of truth. He often repeated the saying, that a letter put into the post-office without a direction was sure to reach no one.

Several instances occurred of the effective force of his ministry, in awakening the conscience. On one occasion, after a sermon from the text, "Be sure your sin will find you out," a gentleman entered the vestry, in great indignation, and addressing him, said, "Sir, I have to charge you with ungentlemanly conduct, I may say dishonourable cruelty, for having exposed me, before the whole congregation, and drawn the eyes of all towards me. I know not who may have been the informers, but you have magnified my delinquencies, as well as published them. I demand an explanation; for I believe that so open an exposure will be found actionable, in a court of law."

Mr. Clayton assured him that till that moment he had never seen him; that he had never received any information concerning him, and did not so much as know his name. Upon this the gentleman presented his card—"Mr. G., Tower Street, London," adding, "You may expect, sir, to hear more from me on this matter." It was not without difficulty that he was calmed and pacified, after he had been repeatedly assured that the preacher had no previous knowledge of him whatever. The result was, that a few Sundays after this explosion, he took sittings for his wife and himself; and continued for some years to be a constant and devout worshipper at the Weighhouse.

Another, and a far more distressing incident,—illustrative both of the force of truth, and the power of conscience,—occurred shortly after that just narrated.

Mr. Clayton was in the habit of delivering courses of sermons, upon topics which he deemed calculated to interest and edify his flock. He was once preaching a series upon Relative Duties, and amongst the rest, the duty of the husband to the wife. At the close of the service, a stranger, of gentlemanly appearance, entered the vestry, and, apologizing for the intrusion, requested a few minutes' conversation, in private, which was granted.

He began by asking the minister if he had received any information concerning his character or circumstances; and was answered by a distinct and unqualified negative. Then, placing his hand on his forehead, with a look of anguish, he exclaimed, "It must be the providence of God!"

He proceeded to state that a few years before, in an evil hour, he yielded to the force of temptation, and forsook his excellent wife,—with respect to whom he had no fault to allege,—and associated himself with a female, who, he foolishly and wickedly thought, would make him more happy than she. He soon found how much he had been deceived. He had learned, by bitter experience, that "the way of transgressors is hard;" and now sincerely mourned his folly and crime.

The sermon he had heard had goaded him almost to madness; and now anxiously he desired to return to the right path. Very earnestly he craved the pity and counsel and prayers of the minister, that he might be helped out of the complications and entanglements of guilt, and regain what he had lost, by his own inexcusable infatuation.

The best advice which an experienced pastor could suggest, at the moment, was given to the penitent transgressor. He was recommended, in his mournful case, to deal with God, rather than man; to read and adopt, as the fittest language he could employ, the 51st Psalm,—and in the same spirit in which it was penned by David; to repair to Calvary, and apply by faith, and plead in prayer, the expiatory atonement of Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin; to make earnest supplication for the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of grace, to restore, sanctify, and comfort him; and never to cherish a doubt of the willingness of God to pardon and accept him, according to His infinite mercy in Christ Jesus.

It appears that he had broken off from the unhallowed connexion; but whether or not he had sought again the wife whom he had so grievously wronged, that he might obtain her forgiveness too, is not known. As the troubled penitent left the presence of the preacher of righteousness, the latter, taking him by the hand, bade him farewell, saying, "Go, and sin no more."

Other, and yet more pleasing, instances of good, effected by his preaching, were brought before him, from time to time. Romanists were turned from superstitious observances to a pure worship. Infidels and irreligious men heard him, and bowed down before the majesty of the Truth.

No case of this latter kind was more interesting, or in its results—so far as they are at present visible—more transcendently important to the church and the world, than the following; while the ultimate issues of the case, who shall divine? It is given in a letter, addressed to Mr. Clayton, by my friend and fellow-townsman, the Rev. W. Ellis,—the veteran missionary, whose name is so honourably and lastingly identified with Polynesia, and with recent religious occurrences in Madagascar—and will speak for itself.

"Gosport, *Jan.* 19*th*, 1816.

"Reverend Father in Christ,—Such you must permit me to call you, when I inform you that, under the blessing of God, your preaching was the means of bringing me to the knowledge of myself, as a lost and guilty sinner, and I trust to a saving knowledge of Christ, as the only Saviour of sinners.

"Impressed with a sense of my ingratitude to God, and the injustice of my conduct towards you, in not acquainting you with His great goodness, I could not leave England without writing to you. I hope you will both pardon my past neglect and the liberty I now take, while I intrude upon you with a few lines.

"In the year 1812, the providence of God placed me at Stoke Newington Green, a short distance from Kingsland. The monthly lecture to young people was to be delivered at Kingsland chapel, in July, 1812, and Mr. J. Clayton, jun., was expected to preach. As some females who resided in the same family with myself attended, I went, merely to accompany them. After stating that the indisposition of your son prevented his addressing us, you named your text, which was from the 71st Psalm and the 17th verse, 'O God, thou hast taught me from my youth,' &c. While you were faithfully and affectionately setting before us the folly and sin of devoting the prime of life to the pleasures of the world, and the service of Satan, God, who is rich in mercy, applied the word with power to my conscience. I saw that I was one of the characters which you had been describing; and desired to be delivered from my evil way, and to enjoy the happiness of having God for the guide of my youth. Before I left the place the language of my soul was, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

"For a long time afterwards I was the subject of strong conviction and much darkness of mind; which darkness was, by degrees, dispersed by the light of divine truth. I continued to attend the preaching of the Gospel at Kingsland, and was united to the church of Christ there.

"On the return of my dear pastor, the Rev. John Campbell, from Africa, with the concurrence of my friends I offered my services as a missionary to the heathen; was accepted by the directors, and by them appointed to strengthen the mission in the South Sea Islands, to which station I am now on the eve of departing. Our vessel lies at Spithead, waiting till He, who commands the winds and the waves, and they obey Him, shall commission those winds to blow propitiously, and waft us to our desired haven.

"Permit me, reverend sir, as one of your spiritual children, to solicit an interest in your prayers. I stand very much in need of them; and am constrained to say, when I contemplate the work I have before me, 'Who is sufficient for these things? but our sufficiency is of God.' On Him alone I depend for grace equal to my day; grace to be faithful even unto death.

"If you have any time to spare, and would kindly direct a few lines of advice and encouragement to me, in my arduous work, I should feel myself greatly obliged thereby.

"That the Lord may bless you abundantly in your own soul, in your family, and in your work, and give you many seals to your ministry, is, reverend sir, the fervent prayer of yours very affectionately in Christ,

"WM. ELLIS."

The following postscript was written by the gentleman whose name is appended to it, and who was, I believe, a student at the same time with Mr. Ellis:—

"It is with peculiar pleasure I have perused the above letter of my dear brother; as I believe you were the honoured instrument in leading *my father* in the road to heaven; and I trust your son, the Rev. J. Clayton, an invaluable, precious, and faithful minister of Christ, has been the means of bringing *me* to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Praying that God would abundantly bless you, and your valuable family, permit me to subscribe myself, yours affectionately in Christ,

"J. B. Moor."

It may well be imagined, that it was with deep emotions Mr. Clayton received this communication; and that he watched with growing interest the successful career of the youthful missionary in his far-distant scene of labour. A letter from Mr. Ellis, written from Huahine, under date of November 25th, 1818, testified to the continuance of the reverential interest with which he regarded his spiritual father, who had conveyed, by the hands of Mr. Campbell, of Kingsland, some token of his paternal sympathy with his son in the faith.

"Reverend and dear Sir,—When on the eve of leaving England for these islands, in great haste, I addressed to you a few lines, conveying intelligence which I supposed it would be gratifying to you to receive. It afforded me much pleasure to learn, by a communication from Mr. Parkinson, dated October 26th, 1816, that my letter had reached you.

"Our vessel being about to sail for Port-Jackson, an opportunity presents itself, which I gladly embrace, to acknowledge the receipt of the liberal present you were pleased to forward to Mr. Campbell, for me; and to return you my sincere thanks for the same. I received the articles in December last: they came very opportunely, and were gratefully welcomed.

"It will doubtless afford you pleasure to hear that the Redeemer's kingdom is rapidly advancing in this remote part of the world. The light of the glorious Gospel—the knowledge of the true God and of Jesus Christ the only Saviour—is spreading far and wide, on the right hand and on the left. On four different islands we have now missionary stations formed. The vigilance and attention of the people in the use of the means of instruction are very encouraging.

"Our congregations are large,—sometimes fifteen hundred are found at our meetings. Our schools are well attended: upwards of one thousand scholars belong to the one at this place. The people are also diligent in teaching each other, where no missionary school has been established. Several thousands of elementary books are among them; but an ardent thirst still prevails, and we are by no means able to meet their pressing demands. About five months back an edition of three thousand copies of Luke's Gospel was finished. Very few now remain undistributed; but the people are not half supplied. There are now more than six thousand people that can read; and we suppose that, before we can get any more books ready, their number will have increased to ten thousand.

"Christianity has become the professed religion of this group, and some of the surrounding islands. There is every reason to believe that many have departed in the faith; and many are now the living monuments of the sovereign grace of God—having been created anew in Christ Jesus.

"These things will rejoice the hearts of all who feel interested in the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, much yet remains to be done; as there are many groups of islands in these seas, where the name of Jesus has never yet been proclaimed to their miserable inhabitants. I doubt not but that you will continue to unite with the thousands that daily beseech a throne of grace, that the Word of God may have free course among the nations, and spread its mighty influence abroad; not only till all the islands in this vast ocean become evangelized, but till 'the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ.'

"Enclosed I have forwarded a copy of the Gospel by Luke; believing it will afford you pleasure to see part of the Word of God in the language of the South Sea islanders. Should you, in any leisure half hour, kindly favour me with a few lines, they will be received with peculiar pleasure by, reverend and dear sir, your obedient servant in Christ,

"William Ellis.

"To the Rev. J. Clayton."

Among those who were accustomed to look up to him, with reverence and attachment, as a minister who had been instrumental in the production or maintenance of their spiritual life, was one who for many years was the honoured and beloved pastor of Craven chapel, Dr. Leifchild. When he went to settle at Kensington, in 1808, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Clayton:—

"MUCH RESPECTED SIR,—It has often been my earnest wish to be indulged with your advice, respecting my settling at this place; but the consideration of my being so little known to you, and an unwillingness to intrude, have as often deterred me from soliciting that favour. No other motive, I trust, has prevailed upon me to come hither, than a conviction of its being the appointment of Him who has promised to direct me in all my paths. If this impression has led me to act improperly, it will yet, I hope, prevent me, sir, from incurring your slightest disapprobation.

"Nothing could give me greater satisfaction than your condescending to take a part in my public designation to the pastoral office, on the second of June. . . . .

"Permit me, sir, to add, with the hope of its not being questioned, nor considered improper, that I do and ever shall deem myself considerably indebted to you, in very many important respects. If I have any clear views of truth, and the least ability to impress it on the minds of others, they have been produced by an attendance on your ministry—a ministry which has effectually weakened sinful attachments, in me the most strong and stubborn, and excited dispositions that no period or changes will ever totally efface.

"Might I be allowed to hope, sir, that, notwithstanding my circumstances and situation, you would honour me with your presence, on the day before mentioned? It would certainly afford a high degree of gratification.—In any case, I shall ever esteem it an honour, sir, to subscribe myself, your obliged and humble servant,

"JOHN LEIFCHILD.

"3, YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON, *May 6th*, 1808."

Twenty-three years afterwards, when invited to the pastorate of the largest Congregational chapel in London, he was again desirous of the presence and sanction of his venerable friend, on the occasion of his recognition. Under date February 18th, 1831, Mr. Leifchild wrote thus:—

"13, Bath Place, New Road, Tottenham Court Road.

"My dear Sir,—I am about to ask a great favour of you, but the peculiar circumstances of the case embolden me in the attempt, and encourage the hope of success. I have felt it my duty to accept a call from the church and congregation at Craven chapel, Regent Street, to become their pastor; and have commenced my labours among them. Your eldest son is acquainted with the whole of my movements relative to this change; and though my mind was kept for some time in a painful state of suspense, as to what was the divine will, I have now a perfect satisfaction of His approbation of my proceedings.

"It is proposed that my setting apart to this office should take place on Wednesday morning, the 13th of March, at the above chapel. The end of the town where the place stands renders it important that the service should be as respectably conducted as is possible among us. Mr. Stratten, Mr. Andrew Reed, Dr. Winter, and Mr. Morison will be invited to take respective parts in the service; but my earnest wish is that you would undertake the address to *me*. You would be left at perfect liberty as to its length, and as might suit your health and convenience.

"What could be so desirable to me as your presence and advice, on that occasion? and what more proper in itself? You will not forget that you were my honoured pastor, and, in a manner, my father in the Gospel; all my early and faint impressions of a religious nature having been so revived and fixed by your never-to-be-forgotten discourses, as almost to appear to have taken their rise from them, through the blessing of the Divine Spirit. I have never yet had an opportunity of meeting you in any public engagement, where this fact could be explicitly recognized; and the feelings associated with it called into lively exercise. I never shall have any other occasion such as the one before me.

"May I not then calculate on your making an effort—great as that effort may be, from your retirement and comparative cessation from public life—to meet my anxious wishes? Allow me to hope to hear speedily from you, in the affirmative; as I shall hesitate to take any step, with respect to the rest of the proceedings, till this point is determined.

"The ministers and friends will dine together at the Freemasons' tavern afterwards; and, could your time allow of it, your presence there would add to what, in the former case, I shall ever consider a great obligation.—I am, very dear sir, with grateful respect and esteem, yours sincerely,

"J. LEIFCHILD.

"REV. J. CLAYTON."

With this request Mr. Clayton complied; and came forth from his retirement at Gaines to fulfil the duty required at his hands. Five days afterwards, he received another communication from Mr. Leifchild, in which, while expressing his gratitude for the part Mr. Clayton had taken in the recognition service, he mentions another instance of his ministerial usefulness that must have greatly cheered the old man's heart.

"14, ALFRED PLACE, BEDFORD ROW, *March 21st*, 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am loth to break in again upon your time, but as I missed the opportunity, which I sought, of speaking to you, after the service of last Wednesday, I cannot forbear thus to express my gratitude to you, for your kind services, and the deep sense I entertain of their value.

"The remarks you addressed to me, fraught with so much wisdom and experience, will never go from my mind. May their influence be seen in the whole of my conduct, and of my public ministrations! I do not forget that I am not a novice—that the midst of my career is already passed, and that it can only be the shorter part that remains; yet I derive from this the most earnest desire that it may be so much the more diligent, honourable, and useful.

"If anything could have beguiled me into a forgetfulness to the lapse of time, it would have been again listening to your voice, which so intimately connected that moment with former years, and placed me in their midst. Both the friends at Craven, and myself and brother ministers, can never forget the last accents of it we have heard, or fail to derive benefit from them. Would that I had the observations before me, correctly, in a permanent form!

"Mr. Blackburn, at the dinner, made an allusion that I hope I may be forgiven for repeating; since it serves to show how usefulness, which descends in its source from above, may be prolonged and multiplied. He claimed also to be considered in a manner *your* son;—not immediately from your ministry, but through the channel of his mother, to whom God had blessed your word; and who poured into his opening mind the truths she imbibed at the Weighhouse, and as she imbibed them: and to those communications he dates his first and decided religious impressions. O what pleasing discoveries of this kind may await us yonder, to increase our admiration of that grace which descended on us so nobly, and extended from us, in so many channels and directions!

"To the Great Author of that grace, and of the glorious Gospel, what praises will be due from you, my dear sir, and from many of your children in the faith! In that faith may we continue firm, till we meet before the throne. I beg my regards to dear Mrs. Clayton; and again apologizing for this intrusion, beg to subscribe myself, yours gratefully,

"J. LEIFCHILD."

Mr. Clayton delighted ever to bestow a kindly notice and show many hospitable attentions to students for the Gospel ministry, and those who were just entering on their public labours. Not a few attended his ministrations, and held communion with his church. Among these were the Rev. William Knight; the Rev. William Anglesarch, who afterwards conformed to the National Church; the Rev. William Lowell, of Woodbridge, and afterwards of Bristol; and at a later period the Revs. Messrs. Dewhirst, of Bury St. Edmunds; Thornton, of Billericay; Durant, of Poole; John Savill, of Colchester; Drs. Payne and Henry Foster Burder; all of whom, with several other students, generally attended his chapel.

He was wont, at all times, and in every period of his life, to exhibit an affectionate interest in their movements, and was ready to assist them in prosecuting their studies at the colleges to which they severally belonged; while he never failed to give them a place in his prayers and intercessions, both public and private. Often did his eye sparkle with joy, when he heard of young men, imbued with piety, and possessed of promising talents, devoting themselves to the service of the sanctuary; while he quoted a favourite saying of one of our old divines, "It is a sure sign that the Great Master is not about to break up housekeeping, when He is seen engaging many new servants in His employ."

Chapter XI.

MR. CLAYTON AS A PASTOR AND A PUBLIC MAN.

ESSAY ON VISITING.—CONTROVERSY ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE.—FIDELITY TO TRUTH.—PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.—MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.—LETTER FROM REV. ROWLAND HILL.—CHARGES DELIVERED TO MINISTERS.—MR. CLAYTON'S CONSERVATISM.—ANECDOTES OF GEORGE THE THIRD.—SERMON ON THE RIOTS AT BIRMINGHAM.—ANIMADVERSIONS OF ROBERT HALL.—SCURRILOUS ATTACK ON MR. CLAYTON.—MR. WILBERFORCE.—PUBLIC SOCIETIES AND COMMITTEES.—CONVERSATIONAL TACT.—ANECDOTE: A WORD IN SEASON.

Mr. Clayton having perceived how little the social intercourse of professing Christians tended to advance the knowledge, to improve the virtues, or to edify the souls of men, sent forth from the press an *Essay on Visiting*, which was much read when it appeared. It was found to be replete with sound advice, seasonable cautions, and useful suggestions; and was designed to lead to conversation in mixed companies

"Such as it behoves man to maintain,
And such as God approves."

It is believed that the divine blessing accompanied this tract; and that not a few were made wiser and better, by the perusal of it. It aimed to purify the converse of Christians from certain blemishes and defects, and to render association more profitable than it too often proves to be. It pretended not to be profound, but was eminently practical and useful.

Prefixed to this brief essay, was a discourse upon *The Snares of Prosperity*, which, apart from its adaptation to general instruction, at all times, and in all places, was intended to bear more especially upon the state of the metropolis—the gain-devoted city; and upon those merchants and traffickers who formed a large portion of the auditory in the Weighhouse, many of whom were "rich and increased with goods."

This kind of preaching and teaching is not always palatable; but that it is necessary, the mournful declensions, over which ministers have to sigh and lament—when some of their hearers are favoured (?) with success in their worldly enterprises—unmistakably evidence. As wealth increases, too often piety declines, in an inverse ratio; and the history of the Laodicean church (Rev. iii. 17, 18) has its repetitions in individuals and families. Amid the splendours of not a few luxurious homes, among the accumulated stores of this world's good, with multiplying barns, and extending domains, how often the conscience-stricken professor, who beholds with dismay his starved and shrivelled soul, has exclaimed, in the anguish of bitter remembrances, "Oh that I were as in months past; as in the days when God preserved me!"

Now too often, with this class of persons, there is an impatience of rebuke, even though it be administered in the kindest manner. A minister becomes "their enemy because he tells them the truth." But he has no alternative. He is to watch for souls, as those that must give account; and to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear. It is as much his duty to "reprove," if need be, as it is to "preach the word." They are both enjoined in the same breath by the Spirit of God (2 Tim. iv. 2). Nor dare he be a respecter of persons. He is to "charge the rich that they be not highminded," as well as warn the poor of the dangers to which their poverty may expose them.

In the maintenance of scriptural discipline, Mr.

Clayton was most reluctantly dragged into controversy with a gentleman of family and fortune, and a man of letters and literary associations, although engaged in commerce. He had married the daughter and co-heiress of an English baronet, and lived in affluence. For many years he had attended Mr. Clayton's ministry; and there subsisted between the two much mutual respect and friendship—a friendship to which there seemed no prospect of a serious interruption.

But increase of wealth and family connexions appeared, as Mr. Clayton thought, to have operated unfavourably on the Christian character of his friend, and to have tarnished the spirituality and consistency of his religious profession. He gradually slid into compliances with the world, which his pastor deeply deplored. He took his family, a large and interesting group of young people, to places of public amusement, and, among others, to theatrical entertainments.

In Mr. Clayton's judgment, the stage was an engine of irreligion and demoralization; at war with all the plans and principles of a godly education among children, and perilous to all spirituality of mind in those of adult age. Nor did he consider that it required any very high degree of moral perspicacity to see this; and although there are some persons who identify these views with puritanical strictness, he was fain to quote two authorities,—as adverse from each other as can well be imagined,—the one that of Rousseau, the French philosopher, a free-thinker and an infidel,—who certainly was no advocate of monkish austerity, or superstitious sanctimoniousness,—yet he wrote a powerful and eloquent treatise against the theatre, as immoral in its tendency and opposed to the civil good of society: and the other, that of Tillotson—

a distinguished archbishop of the English Church, himself far removed from the stiffness of Puritanism—who expresses his conviction that the entertainments of the playhouse are as much the instruments of Satan for the destruction of souls, as are the ordinances of Christianity designed by God for the salvation of men. These amusements may gratify "the unthinking many, but can never secure the approval of those who make the Bible the judge of principles, and the arbiter of practice."

The gentleman in question scrupled not, when his household were at the sea-side, or at a distance from home, to adopt the practice of Sunday travelling, that he might meet the claims of business, and fill his place in the London market.

On removing to a large and elegant house, situated in one of the suburban villages, he gave his balls and routs, with a disregard to expense, and an undiscriminating promiscuousness, that excited the astonishment and grief of those who had hearkened to the declaration of the Great Author of Christianity:—"Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and who reverenced the teaching of the apostle Paul, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Mr. Clayton mourned over a state of things by which he conceived the honour of Christ and His church was obscured; a guilty concession made to the world, in its vanities and frivolities; the consciences of pious persons wounded; a stumbling-block cast in the way of inquirers, and the lines of demarcation—drawn in Holy Scripture between a profession of Christian godliness and the world lying in wickedness—entirely effaced.

It was to him also a grief of heart, that the dear young people of the family, whom he tenderly loved as lambs of the fold, and all of whom he had dedicated to God in baptism, should be thus led astray, and early drilled into worldly observances, and led to form worldly associations. He regarded all this as a sacrilegious violation of the vows of the parents, by which he conceived they were laid under solemn obligations, to teach their children to renounce the "pomps and vanities of this wicked world," as well as "all the sinful lusts of the flesh."

In dealing with this case, Mr. Clayton resorted, in the first instance, to private admonition and friendly remonstrance; yet failed in producing, on the minds of the heads of the family, the effect which he wished and hoped for.

When they went to reside at a distance from the city, they worshipped in a sanctuary near to their new residence, and were allowed to partake of the ordinance of the Lord's supper in that place. After a while, they desired to be transferred from the church in Eastcheap to that at Peckham; and requested the usual testimonials of Christian character.

To this Mr. Clayton demurred; feeling that, under the circumstances of the case, if he and the church should give a favourable testimony to those whom he regarded as flagrantly inconsistent, both he and his flock would incur, and very justly, the imputation of bearing false witness. A correspondence ensued, which ended in a printed paper war. Various pamphlets were published; statements and counter-statements made; and caricatures appeared in the shop windows, insulting to the minister and the church.

Throughout the whole of this painful affair, Mr.

Clayton considered that he suffered for conscience sake; and bore up under the acrimony and insolence of browbeating violence. None of these things moved him. Firm as a rock he braved the storm, and saw the foaming billows dash harmlessly at his feet. Testimonials he could not give; and he was inflexibly determined that no consideration on earth should extort them from him. Firmness of principle and conscious integrity sustained him. "Duty is ours," said he; "consequences must be left with God."

The church was summoned by special notice. The particulars were laid before the assembly, and calmly deliberated on; resolutions were unanimously voted, confirmatory of the pastor's views; and the testimonials, so loudly clamoured for, were refused.

Thus terminated the controversy. The opinions expressed concerning it were varied, according to the sentiments or prejudices entertained by the critics; but it may not be amiss to mention the impression made on the minds of two clergymen, of acknowledged judgment and wide-spread celebrity, in sections of the Christian church diverse, in their polity, from that in which Mr. Clayton was found. The first was the Rev. Richard Cecil, of St. John's Episcopal chapel, in Bedford Row.

"Clayton," said he, "I have long respected you, but I have never before envied you. I own, I do now *envy* you; because I hear that you have applied the discipline of the church to a man that rides in his coach!"

The other was the Rev. Rowland Hill. In a note, addressed to the Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, he thus writes:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND, NEIGHBOUR, AND BROTHER,—A famous publication has appeared against your father; and the name of

Rowland Hill seems quoted against his *narrow* notions, in not giving his members a little more *elbow room*, who want only now and then a treat at ball, a card-table, a playhouse, or an innocent walk into that most infamous place for assignations—Vauxhall Gardens.

"I have therefore esteemed it my duty to address Mr. R—— on this occasion. I wish you or your father to see that letter before I send it. Can we meet here on Monday morning, at breakfast? and, to prove your neighbourly affection, can you preach here on Tuesday eve next?—Yours affectionately,

"Surrey Ch., *Sat. eve.* "R. Hill.

"My servant only wants a verbal answer, as you'll receive this on a Sunday."

While Mr. Clayton was chiefly sustained by the "*mens conscia recti*," it was some source of gratification to find that lookers on, who were not likely to be unduly biassed in his favour by ecclesiastical sympathies, thus heartily endorsed and commended his fidelity to his convictions, and to the claims of consistency and truth.

But Mr. Clayton had to stand up for the defence and maintenance of the truth, on a somewhat wider arena than was presented to him at the Weighhouse.

On the occasion of the ordination of the Rev. Joseph Brooksbank, a young minister who, in 1785, had been called to succeed the Rev. Dr. Gibbons, at Haberdashers' Hall, Wood Street, London, Mr. Clayton delivered the charge, which he afterwards printed. Not long after this he was called upon to perform a similar service at Collier's Rents, Borough, at the ordination of the Rev. James Knight, who had been a member of his church, and a student at Homerton college, under Dr. Gibbons and Dr. Fisher.

This charge, like the former, gave umbrage to certain parties, whose animadversions only served to increase, very considerably, the sale and circulation of the pamphlets. They contain much wholesome advice, given with a parental freedom, authority, and affection, which, even at this day, would be found to supply a profitable study to the young pastor, on entering upon the duties of the sacred office.

It was evident, from more than one paragraph in these charges, that Mr. Clayton's mind inclined rather to conservatism than liberalism, not only in matters religious, but in those pertaining to the things of this world.

When the mind of the public was exasperated by party politics, and the horrors of the French Revolution made every ear tingle, and many hearts bleed, he set his face like a flint against what he termed "the revolutionary mania;" and while barbarous atrocities were practised in a neighbouring land, and corresponding societies, treasonable plots, seditious libels, and furious demagogues, were in activity at home, he felt it to be his duty to insist much on relative obligations—especially those which refer to the subject and the magistrate.

He strenuously maintained that he never took politics into the pulpit, while, at the same time, he bore his testimony to the requirements of Christianity, as to civil, relative, and social duties. He brought before his auditory discourses, founded on such texts as Romans xiii. 1, 2: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God;" and the kindred passages, 1 Timothy ii. 1–3; 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 17.

In discussing these duties, he endeavoured to discriminate between the exploded doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, and that rational, just, and religious deference to constituted authorities, so indispensable to the liberty, safety, and prosperity of the empire.

The course he took proved offensive to not a few of his ministerial brethren; and to the whole fraternity of Jacobins and revolutionists, who rose up in arms against him, in squibs, pamphlets, and caricatures. But he continued to give utterance to what he believed to be the truth of God, whether his fellow-men approved or raved.

"How could I do otherwise," he said, "when seditious movements are constantly presenting themselves to my notice, with vulgar abuse of men in power; when profane parodies on the litany, and other devotional pieces, in the form of ballads, are sung in the streets by a misguided rabble; and when I am credibly assured that a certain minister, in the county of Norfolk, has proclaimed from his pulpit, that he and thirty thousand more are ready to join the revolutionary army of France, should they effect a landing on the British coast?"

He tasked all his strength to stem the torrent of democratic fury, which then threatened to sweep away the ancient landmarks, and to involve law, order, commerce, and liberty,—in its genuine sense—in one desolating flood.

To the reigning sovereign, George the Third, he felt not only as a loyal subject, but entertained towards his Majesty a real personal esteem and attachment. This was strengthened by circumstances, that gave him the opportunity of knowing many of the private virtues and excellent qualities which distinguished that prince.

Being on intimate terms of friendship with Mr. C——, first clerk of the works, and Mrs. Pratt, head nurse to the Princess Amelia, he was put in possession of many facts which threw light on the private character of the king, who uniformly showed his concern and respect for liberty of conscience, and was determined practically to uphold its rights. This was in strict keeping with his oft-repeated declaration, that there should be no persecution for conscience sake, in his time.

Mr. Clayton received from these members of the royal household the following facts, as illustrative of the king's sentiments, in relation to this matter. Walking, one day, in the castle grounds, he missed a young man, who had been employed in them, and whom he had often noticed, for his diligence, activity, and evident respectability. He sent for the head gardener, and inquired what had become of the youth who worked in that portion of the grounds—describing his general appearance.

"Please your Majesty, I dismissed him," was the reply.

"On what account?" asked the king. "I hope he has committed no crime deserving such punishment."

The gardener hesitated. "Come, tell me," said the monarch, "all about it."

"Please your Majesty, he has turned Methodist, and joined the Whitfieldites."

"Is that all?" the king replied; "then I command you to send for him without delay, and reinstate him in his employment. I will have no persecution for conscience sake; and besides, I would have you understand, that if I were to change my religion I should turn Methodist too!"

Another instance which occurred was this. On a certain Sunday, during the war, at an early hour, a special courier arrived from Downing Street, to apprise the king that very important despatches had been received from the Continent, which required that not a moment should be lost in considering them; and that a cabinet council had been summoned for that day, at which the royal presence was considered indispensable. Orders were instantly issued for the court to travel to London. The king, even in the midst of hurried preparations, happened to recollect that it was not only Sunday, but the day when the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered, at the Congregational chapel, of which Mrs. Pratt was a member, and where she statedly communicated. "Let Pratt," said he, "have a post-chaise, and follow us after divine service: I know where she wishes to be on this day."

On one occasion, when the court was staying at Weymouth, the king met Mr. L——, as he was returning on the Sunday from chapel, while he was himself returning from church. With his accustomed familiarity and condescension, he called to Mr. L——, and entered into conversation with him. Among other things he inquired, "L——, does your minister always pray for the king and royal family?"

"Always, please your Majesty; and most fervently and sincerely, too. I wish your Majesty could have heard him this very morning."

"If he does it at all," was the reply, "it must be sincerely; for you see that I pay *my* ministers for it, and they must pray for us, willingly or unwillingly."

On the occasion of the well-known Birmingham riots, Mr. Clayton put forth his public testimony, in the shape of a sermon, on the text, Luke xii. 14, "And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It embodied some conservative sentiments, which would not be wholly endorsed by many of his brethren then, and still less now. It was written under certain impulses, created by a state of society which happily does not at present exist; although the demand and the necessity for change are almost as great, in some things, as in Mr. Clayton's polemical days. The people have, however, found out "a more excellent way" than was popular at that period. Calm, firm, respectful demands, sustained by intelligence, and enforced by moral worth and social power, must ere long prevail.

To this sermon there appeared a great number of replies; some written by ministers of the Gospel, others by laymen, and, at least one, by a female pen. His own account of these matters is given in the sermon he preached and published at the conclusion of the French war, on the proclamation of national peace.

Among those who wrote against Mr. Clayton's sermon was that great and good man, the Rev. Robert Hall, then minister of the Baptist church at Cambridge. His strictures contained some strong reasoning, clothed in his own peculiar style of unrivalled eloquence, and, doubtless, produced a powerful impression.*

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* Many years after, Mr. Clayton thus writes on the subject of Mr. Hall's attack: "Mr. Hall, of Cambridge, did me the honour to write some animadversions, on the above short sermon, which I never read, except a quotation in the *Monthly Review;* for I did not wish any materials to lodge in my mind, which, through my own infirmity, might lessen my respect for a *son* whose *father* I well knew, and highly esteemed, for his biblical wisdom, eminent piety, universal holiness, and extensive usefulness. It is not long since I had the pleasure of dining in a company where Mr. Hall was a guest. The conversation happened to turn on church music; many present did not agree with him in opinion, any more than myself. His patience of contradiction, and suavity of manners, led me to esteem him highly in love, for the Christian temper he exemplified on that occasion." It is refreshing to think that the

But neither to these, nor any other similar attacks, did Mr. Clayton make any reply; because his conscience told him that, according to the light he possessed, he had taken the course which, in his judgment, the truth of God, the circumstances of the times, the welfare of his country, and the good of immortal souls, rendered imperative. He felt that he was too busy, in the appropriate services of his pastoral charge, to give any of his time to controversy; and was not without fear that through the temptations of that adversary who is emphatically "the accuser of the brethren," and his own infirmity, he might be betrayed into unhallowed passion, in the effort of self-vindication, and write unadvisedly with his pen; by which the interests of our common Christianity might be disserved rather than assisted. He therefore maintained a determined silence, which was not the offspring of pride, or sullenness, or conviction of error, but of prudence.

It is probable that Mr. Hall was incited to write some bitter things against this sermon by a person then living at Cambridge, who, although related to Mr. Clayton's family, might perhaps be regarded as an enemy, because the latter had reproved him for mal-practices in money affairs, and had withdrawn from all association with him.

With this person Mr. Hall was then on terms of intimacy; but in process of time he saw reason entirely

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two antagonists were, in the evening of their days, brought into happy fraternization, and did really love as brethren.

Mr. Hall once observed, in a select company, at Denmark Hill, that if he were asked to name a man whom he considered the happiest, in the wide sphere of his observation, he should without hesitation point to Mr. Clayton. "Looking," said he, "at his domestic relations, his personal endowments and character, his happiness in his church, and his position and usefulness in the world, I seriously regard him as the most favoured individual I ever saw, or ever heard of."

to decline his friendship; alleging that, "if acrimony were to be banished from our world, Mr. —— would die the death of starvation, for the want of his chosen aliment."

Some few years subsequent to this, the same party sent forth a scurrilous pamphlet, replete with slander and insult towards Mr. Clayton. Shortly after it appeared, he was met by a friend, in the streets of London, who, with a grave and sorrowful aspect, assured him of his sincere condolence, upon the virulent attack made upon him and his family. Mr. Clayton thanked the worthy gentleman for his sympathy, which he duly appreciated; but begged him to understand that he considered it to be matter for congratulation, rather than condolence; inasmuch as the harshest vituperation from the quarter referred to, he regarded as his highest commendation, adding, in a line of Milton:—

> "Of whom to be dispraised, is highest praise."

"Sir," replied his friend, "you stand there, do you?"

"I do so," said Mr. Clayton; "and anything and everything which that individual can say or write against me amounts not to 'insect vexation.'"

Some persons thought that he should send to the press an answer to a publication, in many particulars utterly false, and throughout abusive; but his own fixed resolve was comprised in the edict of king Hezekiah to his servants, respecting the insolent letter of Rabshakeh,—"Answer him not."

"Two parties, at least," said Mr. Clayton, "are necessary to a fight; and if one only is determined to strike, let him have the comfort of beating the air,—all by himself,—alone."

Mr. Clayton, from his prominent position in the dissenting ministry in London, was regarded by those who were not identified with Nonconformists, but who looked with interest upon their movements, ecclesiastical and political, as a representative man; and was, consequently, more than once consulted, by those in power, on matters of moment, connected with the religious liberties of the people, both here and in some of the distant dependencies of the empire. With the leaders in philanthropic movements he was in frequent intercourse; and the following letter from Mr. Wilberforce was written, after some communication had passed from Mr. Clayton, on public affairs:—

"Near LONDON, *May* 1st, 1810.

"DEAR SIR,—I beg you will accept my best thanks for your very interesting letter; not in the unmeaning sense in which acknowledgments of this sort are generally made, but as really feeling the obligation. Information on such a subject, from a person like you, with whose principles and practice I am so well acquainted, must have due weight with me; and, at the same time that I am careful how I use your name, I will endeavour to turn it to the best account. Let me beg you to communicate freely to me any further information or suggestions which may be useful to me.—I remain, dear sir, your faithful servant,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"P.S. I trust you will excuse my writing by another hand."

Mr. Clayton commenced his ministry in London some time before the great religious societies were formed which, at the present day, make such heavy demands on public men—especially ministers,—and seriously interfere with the efficient discharge of home duties. His time and energies were almost wholly devoted to his pulpit and pastoral engagements, some of which were very onerous. When, therefore, these new Christian confederations were formed, it was not easy for him to find the leisure necessary for attendance on boards and committees. By some persons he was censured, as deficient in public spirit, because he was so intently occupied in attending to the claims of his own people, and did not very conspicuously espouse the new institutions as they arose. He saw and acknowledged their importance; their excellence, and their wise adaptation to secure the objects they severally contemplated. But they found him engaged, not to say tasked, to the utmost of his capabilities. His days were constantly occupied; his powers were on the full stretch; while his husbandry of time, and his love of order, prevented his doing much for these laudable enterprises, beyond giving them his good wishes and prayers, his hearty recommendation, and his annual subscription.

His personal services were not, however, utterly withheld from them. He assisted in directing the affairs of the Old College, Homerton; Hoxton Academy (afterwards Highbury College); the Widows' Fund; the Orphan Working School; the Newport Pagnel Institute; and the Congregational Fund Board, where his seat was seldom or never vacant.

He often made excursions from home, in the settlement of newly-formed churches, the ordination of pastors, the advocacy of schools, and other works of Christian benevolence. At one time, we find him supplying, for six weeks, the pulpit of a new chapel, opened at Cheltenham, on the plan of his revered patroness, the Countess of Huntingdon. At another, he undertook a mission to the sister kingdom, for the London Hibernian Society. So that the charge of a want of public spirit could hardly be sustained, except by those—and there are such—who imagine that they do well to cultivate the vineyard of others, even if their own lies waste. Let it not, however, be forgotten, that there are those who err in the opposite direction. Nothing can draw them from their retirement; and thus the burden, which, if shared, would have been more lightly borne by those who now do the whole of the work, becomes oppressive. God's cause must be carried on by God's people; and those "unattached" to any of our societies, religious or philanthropic, will do well to ask whether they are not ministering to a species of refined selfishness, when they coolly look on, and let others labour; while they do not so much as "touch the burdens with one of their fingers," although earnestly importuned to do so. Some, by whom the harness has been worn until it has become familiar to them, would be thankful for a relief, if not for a reprieve.

Mr. Clayton strove to remember, wherever he journeyed or abode, that he was a servant of the Great Master, "who went about doing good." He endeavoured to use his opportunities for benefiting others, whenever they presented themselves. There was something of marked peculiarity, in the facility with which he entered into converse with strangers, and in the felicitous adaptation of his remarks to the rank, education, and calling of those whose highest good he sought to promote.

On a visit which he paid to the city of Norwich,—the scene of some of his early labours—on behalf of the London Missionary Society, it was observed, among several of the families by whom he was hospitably entertained, that they had never before seen conversational talent employed with so much wisdom and practical benefit. The heads of households, the children, the visitors, the servants, severally engaged his attention, and hung upon his lips; so that his private discourse seemed to be as impressive and useful as his public addresses. In fact his tongue was as choice silver, his instructions were as a tree of life.

An instance of the tact with which he was gifted, in administering reproof, even to strangers, occurred in one of his journeys into the north of England.

At Leicester, a young man mounted the roof of the coach, whose conversation was marked by so much profaneness and obscenity, as to astonish and disgust the passengers. At the next stage, when the horses were changed, Mr. Clayton, taking this reprobate youth by the arm, and leading him to a little distance from the company, observed,—

"I have been greatly surprised and grieved that a person so well dressed as you are, and of such respectable outward appearance, should have given your tongue so unbridled a licence, in the impure and hateful discourse in which you have indulged, while we have travelled together. You have offended all the passengers, I can assure you; but this is not the worst of it: you have really disgraced yourself, sinned against your own soul, and affronted your Almighty Creator. If for 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,' what may be apprehended by them whose utterances are those of impiety and indecency? I pray you, as your friend, to renounce this evil habit. The fault is more that of the heart than of the mouth; and therefore I recommend to you the prayer which you will find in the 51st Psalm: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'"

The young man listened with respectful attention; and giving his hand to the reprover, thanked him for his advice, and promised that he would offend no more, after that sort; and certainly so far kept his promise that not another improper word escaped his lips, to the end of the journey.

This recital may serve for instruction and direction to those persons who, deterred by the fear of casting pearls before swine, forego opportunities of useful admonition, and may seem, by their silence, to tolerate what is sinful. It may turn out that, instead of "the rending of the swine," there may be found the happy combination of "the wise reprover and the obedient ear."

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REV. JOHN CLAYTON, SEN.

BY A. C. HOBART SEYMOUR, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON."

[After the preceding portions of this volume had been written, and in answer to a request I made, at the close of a short article I wrote, on the life of the Rev. John Clayton, jun., which was inserted in the columns of the *Evangelical Magazine*, in January, 1866, I received the following sketch of his father, from the venerable compiler of the *Memoirs of the Countess of Huntingdon*. It is so interesting—including, as it does, two or three unpublished letters of the countess, and of Lady Glenorchy, on matters relating to Mr. Clayton, and a detail of incidents, not noticed in the foregoing pages—that I have resolved to print his communication by itself, as an appendix to one of the chapters of the Memoir; and this appears to me to be the most fitting place for its insertion.

A more valuable and well-informed chronicler than my venerable correspondent, on subjects connected with the progress of evangelical truth in this kingdom, during the last sixty years, does not exist. I am glad to find that his facile pen is still employed on this, to him, familiar subject; and pray that he may be spared yet for many days to come, to enrich the annals of the churches with his valuable and acceptable reminiscences.—T. A.]

"Remember your Leaders, who have spoken to you the Word of God, the final issue of whose conduct attentively observing, be imitators of their fidelity."

It was my privilege, when a very young man, to have attracted the particular notice, and secured the paternal regard of Mr. Clayton. He has a record deeply engraven in the hearts of thousands,—*ære perennius:* and it will be a pleasure to myself to leave behind me this testimony to my departed friend; and to honour him, dead, whom, living, I so highly respected. I leave this sacred testimony to his worth: that never did human being act with more real kindness, affection, and zeal, than did Mr. Clayton to me, in a season of great perplexity and doubt, as to my future course in life. You have given a general invitation to all who loved him when living, and honoured him departed, to send you any particulars with which they are acquainted. I have examined some papers that I am providentially possessed of, and have collected from them every fact of importance: and I shall speak from personal knowledge and acquaintance. These sources, united, I hope will furnish me with some valuable materials respecting this distinguished veteran in the cause of God and truth—add additional information to your tribute to his memory—and afford to those, who remember him with gratitude, and hold him high in honour for his work's sake, a subject of pleasing recollection, as well as abundant improvement.

I can never forget the particulars of my first interview with Mr. Clayton. I had been invited to dine at the house of a clergyman, without any intimation that I should meet any one but the usual family circle. On entering the room I found the host and hostess absent—two young ladies and Mr. Clayton being the only persons present. I immediately recognized him, from having heard him preach. After speaking to the sisters of my host, and observing me looking a little embarrassed, Mr. Clayton advanced to meet me, and, extending his right hand, grasped the hand that writes these words, and, placing the other on my shoulder, addressed me in the following words, whilst a most benignant smile played around his features:—

"My dear young friend, I am really delighted to meet you on this occasion; and to make an acquaintance that shall, I trust, be renewed in the temple above. Thank God, you are on the Lord's side. Fear not, God will bless you; and hail reproach, and welcome shame, if these must be endured for the faithful testimony of God our Saviour."

His noble aspect, and gentlemanly bearing, excited my admiration. I was surprised and affected by his cordial address. It was evident he knew that I was to be a guest, and had been informed of my peculiar position and trials. As he had learned I belonged to a family, known for the conspicuous part they took in the great Reformation from Popery, he congratulated me on my adherence to the faith of my ancestors, for the defence of which so many of them had shed their blood. On being informed, by my worthy host, that very many of my relatives, on the female side, were the victims of the fatal revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he renewed the subject with increasing ardour.

During my residence at Brighton, in the year 1819, I had frequent opportunities of meeting Mr. Clayton, not only at my own house, where he was always a welcome guest, but at the houses of others. He opened his ministry at Lady Huntingdon's chapel with these words,—"I am come to see how you do;" and to many of the old worshippers in that time-honoured sanctuary, his address was peculiarly acceptable. How long he remained in Brighton, at that time, I do not recollect. I recall with delight a particular instance of his paternal regard for my dear departed wife, now a saint with him in glory. He presented her with a copy of the *Hymn Book* in use in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, accompanied with his warm and cordial good wishes for her temporal and eternal welfare; and in the first leaf was contained a full exposition of her title to eternal life, concluding thus:—"In the bonds of Christian love, I am yours, heartily and sincerely, J. Clayton."

Providential circumstances having separated us, and residing in different and distant places, years passed without an interview; yet occasionally we had the happiness of meeting, and his friendship ceased only when death loosed the silver cord. Two of the three are gone to their eternal rest, and bending under a hoary head I have advanced to the very margin of the stream —the narrow stream of death, which divides me from those who have gone before, and have obtained the prize.

A minister of the everlasting Gospel should carry with him, everywhere, the spirit of his profession. Not only should his own house be a daily temple, but wherever he resides, the sweet savour of his ministrations, and his peace should rest upon the house which receives him. Mr. Clayton was particularly observant of the irreligion in many families of the clergy themselves, where a bended knee was seldom seen, and such forgetfulness of God evident that, even where he was invited as a guest, the very table was unblest. But Mr. Clayton's character needed no contrast to display its excellence. Wherever he visited among his friends, they always found the richest enjoyment in his morning and evening exercises, and esteemed it amongst their privileges to have such a chaplain in their family.

In candour, liberality, and zeal, it is impossible not to acknowledge that he was superior to every bigoted attachment. In the many opportunities that offered, where he was exclusively associated with ministers and individuals belonging to the Established Church, I never once heard him express anything but the most cordial regard to all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." I had many evidences of the true catholicism of his spirit; and various instances, which I have observed, demonstrate his cordial and kind attachment to those who in point of church government differed greatly from him. He had learned to call no man common or unclean, for differing from him, in matters which he had learned to estimate according to the scale of their real importance.

At Lady Huntingdon's college, at Trevecca, he was amongst the earliest students; for I find his name associated with Messrs. Aldridge, Cooke, English, Crole, and Matthew Wilks, in the year 1772, when the noble foundress addressed a letter to all the ministers and students in her Connexion, inviting a general meeting at the college, in order to consult together, and to ask counsel from on high, upon a measure at once new and important—namely, a mission to North America, whose head-quarters should be at Bethesda; from which the missionaries could go forth, either to the savages in the forest, or among the white men of the colonies, wherever the providence of God opened a way, to publish the everlasting Gospel.

The occasion proved to be one of unusual interest. Missionary zeal was enkindled; the baptism of a self-sacrificing love fell upon many hearts; and at the call, "Who will go for us? who will publish the glad tidings of great joy in the forests and frontiers of the New World?" the response came from many a youth, "Here am I, send me."

The impressive services which attended the selection and setting apart of the students for the North American Mission, both at Trevecca and Tottenham Court Road chapel, and in the open air on Tower-Hill, were witnessed by large numbers, deeply and tenderly excited by the scene. It is a fact worthy of being recorded, that all the ministers engaged in that solemn and imposing service were episcopally ordained. There were NINE clergymen who took part in the dedication, and I am particular in giving their names, for I think them worthy of being had in remembrance:—The Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, cousin and chaplain to the countess, and rector of Loughrea, in the county of Galway, Ireland; Rev. William Piercy, president of the college in Georgia, and subsequently rector of St. Paul's, Savannah; Rev. Cradock Glascott, rector of Hatherleigh, Devonshire; Rev. James Glazebrook, minister of St. John's, Warrington; Rev. Charles Stewart Eccles, of Fintona, county of Tyrone, Ireland; Rev. Mr. Cross, of Bradford, head master of the Georgian college; Rev. Mr. Williams, a Welch clergyman; Rev. Mr. Owen, and Rev. John Green;—the last two assistants at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road chapel.

From the published narrative of this remarkable event, it does not appear that Mr. Clayton took any prominent part in the preliminary services held at the college, for some days previous to the departure of the countess, her chaplains, and the seven students, for London. Public services were continued for a fortnight at Trevecca; and several of the students, whose names are not given, took a leading part in them; as there was a sermon every day.

This was one of the earliest of those sublime spectacles of missionary embarkation which, from the impulse that Methodism was then giving to English Protestantism, have now become common. The religious community of the metropolis was stirred by the occasion, and it was not inaptly called "*The Methodist Jubilee.*" An embarkation hymn, written by Mr. Shirley, was printed for the occasion. It begins,—

> "Go, destined vessel, heavenly freighted, go!
> For, lo! the Lord's ambassadors are there."

Immense throngs crowded the river's side; and when the ship started, a solemn and affecting scene was presented. Every countenance was suffused with tears; hats and handkerchiefs were to be seen waving in all directions, and many voices were heard, bidding these servants of God farewell; while prayers and good wishes ascended as a cloud of incense to the Great Head of the church, recommending them to His merciful protection and care. Such a spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out upon the people of God, at this interesting period, as has seldom been remembered. Every heart was affected; and the impressions then made were attended with the most beneficial results. As an illustration of the renovated evangelism of the times, this remarkable event can never lose its interest. "A remarkable outpouring of the Spirit," wrote the countess, "attended the scene; and nothing was ever so blessed as the spirit in which they all went."

At Trevecca, Mr. Clayton continued some years; where, by close application to study, he so improved in theology, and other branches of knowledge connected with it, that the noble foundress sent him forth to the neighbouring villages, to diffuse the sweet savour of the Gospel of our salvation. In a letter to John Lloyd, Esq., of Swansea, her ladyship speaks thus of Mr. Clayton:—

"I am at my wits' end for the services of my chapels. The calls are so numerous, from all parts, that I am unable to comply with the wishes of the people, who seem hungering after the bread of life. All the students that can be of any effectual service are labouring diligently; and I have every confidence in the zeal and ability of Aldridge, Clayton, Crole, and others,—faithful souls, who preach, frequently out of doors, to large and attentive congregations. So many having gone from the college, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, on the continent of America, those that remain have a laborious work. But souls are perishing daily, hourly, momentarily, and can we be idle? He who sees the heart knoweth my only one object upon earth is, to be His servant, in all ways wherein He may be glorified, and sinners snatched from destruction."

In another letter, of a later date, the countess further alludes to the ministerial abilities and successful labours of Mr. Clayton, and some of his fellow-students:—

"You cannot tell how many hearty prayers are put up for the dear students, daily, especially for English,* Crole,† and Clayton, who labour so abundantly, and have been singularly owned and blessed of God. May they enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth! The work is flourishing amazingly; the Gospel runs and is glorified; and the Holy Ghost descends in a most glorious manner, amidst the congregations where they minister. Unworthy as I am, the Lord Jesus Christ deigns to work in and by me. O sovereign free grace! How sweet to the soul, who really feels the power of it! O that I may walk worthy of that holy vocation wherewith we are called!

"I thank you heartily for your kind letter. It rejoices my soul to hear that you and Mr. Wilson‡ are going on hand in hand so zealously, so perseveringly, and so successfully in the good cause. You are able helpers in the great things of God. When we get to heaven, how shall we praise God for what He hath done for our souls!

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* Rev. Thomas English, of Woburn, Beds.

† Rev. Anthony Crole, of Pinner's Hall, London.

‡ John Lloyd, Esq., of Swansea, and Richard Wilson, Esq., were men of influence and fortune, and the steady friends of the countess. Mr. Lloyd was one of the devisees named in the will of Lady Huntingdon. His eldest daughter, Anne, married the late John Walcot, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, and for many years a member of the Tabernacle congregation, at Bristol—author of works on botany, conchology, and ornithology. Mr. Walcot was a descendant of the family of Walcot, of Croagh, in the county of Clare, Ireland, and nephew of William Cecil, first Lord Glentworth, father of the first Earl of Limerick. Mr. Walcot's sister, Susanna, was the wife of the Rev. Thomas Young, of Margate, a minister long known and respected in the Countess of

"I have written to English and Clayton, ordering them to another part of the vineyard: and their places will be filled by others from the college. Glory be to God for raising up such instruments for carrying on His cause in the world! The searcher of hearts only knows how the welfare of perishing souls is impressed upon my soul. I continually make mention of them in my poor prayers; and I have not failed to give thanks for the showers of blessing, and the success which has attended the college. I serve a precious Master, and He makes me more than conqueror. My work is great, but my supports are greater. My infirmities often make me blush; and yet my gracious Master passes them by, and sweetly carries me through the burden of every day's labour. He enables me to cast all my care upon Him. O then let us magnify His name together!"

Having obtained an established reputation as a preacher, Lady Huntingdon appointed Mr. Clayton to supply her principal chapels, and his services were very acceptable and useful among her congregations; and indeed wherever he went, his talents and zeal, his eloquence and piety, commanded universal esteem.

The distinguished station in which he was placed held Mr. Clayton up, more than ever before, to public observation; and the subjects he treated excited general attention from their dissimilarity to everything around him, especially in the churches of Norwich. The fame of his preaching awakened

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Huntingdon's Connexion. Mrs. Walcot died in 1782, and her funeral sermon was preached in the chapel of Lady Huntingdon, at Bath, by the Rev. Mr. Pentycross, vicar of St. Mary's, Wallingford, from 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57, and was afterwards published.

Francis Wilson, Esq., of Clapham Common, son of the above Richard Wilson, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Lloyd, Esq. She resided in Pulteney Street, Bath, for many years—was a liberal benefactor to the chapel and the institutions connected with it, and always ready to consecrate her property to the cause of God. She died July 14th, 1820, aged fifty-seven, and was interred in a walled grave, near the tablet, erected to her memory, in the chapel of the countess.

general attention there; and how highly his noble patroness thought of him and his labours, her own account will best tell.

"It will rejoice your heart, my dear Shirley,* to hear that the Gospel triumphs. The auditories are very large and very attentive. Mr. Clayton writes me word that many have been brought under convictions, and that he has never seen anything like the work of God at Norwich. Glory be to free grace! Unworthy as I am, the glorious Immanuel condescends to crown my poor services with success. Every day fresh seals are given to the faithful labours of the students. People are daily coming under deep convictions, and crying, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Mr. Clayton preaches frequently, and expounds at private houses. He is employed, in speaking to souls under distress, great part of the day. I want more help for that part of the work. O that God may enlarge your heart to come and give some assistance, as soon as you are free to do it! I love and honour you for your Master's sake. And my prayer to God is, that the glorious Gospel may flourish in your hands, and that you may bring many, very many souls to Jesus. This, unless my heart deceives me, is my only aim on earth.

'For this let men revile my name;
I shun no cross, I fear no shame:
All hail, reproach, and welcome, pain,
Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain!'

"Whilst I write, the fire kindles in my heart. It is overflowing with the love of God, and love for the souls He died to save. Amazing, that He should suffer me to labour for Him! Help me to cry, Grace! grace! Surely I shall sing it in heaven! I long to be there, but am willing to tarry the Lord's pleasure. Excuse this freedom; but surely I am writing to one that loves to spend and be spent in the service of the best of Masters. May His presence go with you to Norwich, and cause you to triumph there and in every place, and fill your soul with joy unspeakable.

"I shall wait with impatience for your answer. I heartily wish all the Lord's servants were prophets. How I do long to see bigotry and party-zeal taken away, and all the people of God more knit together. Dear Mr. Venn is actively engaged, and so is faithful Glascott. Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath sent forth so many of His servants with this cry,

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* The Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. May thousands obey the call, and go forth to meet Him, with their lamps trimmed.—Your unworthy friend, and unprofitable fellow-labourer in the Lord's vineyard,

"S. Huntingdon."

From a letter of Lady Huntingdon's I find Mr. Clayton was labouring, in 1776, with singular benediction on his ministry, at the Mulberry Gardens chapel, in London. In the October of the same year, the late Rev. George Burder, soon after his ordination, commenced preaching occasionally in London, and not unfrequently assisted Mr. Clayton and Mr. Aldridge, at Jewin Street chapel, and Mr. Crole, at Cumberland Street chapel. It is a singular circumstance, that Mr. Clayton and Mr. Burder were, at this period, scarcely determined whether to take their lot with the Dissenters, or not. They had found abundantly more of the power of God with evangelical clergymen, and with the Calvinistic Methodists; and were rather inclined to enter into the Church, under the apprehension of obtaining a more extensive field of usefulness; but upon further investigation they were led to dissent, for reasons that appeared to them of sufficient weight. The great Lord of the vineyard, however, destined Mr. Clayton to move in a more public and extensive sphere of usefulness, for which his talents signally qualified him. His fame had reached the respectable congregation of Congregational Dissenters, assembling at the King's Weighhouse; and being then in want of a minister, their attention was directed to Mr. Clayton, as one likely to fill the office, with reputation to himself, and with advantage to the people.

Some years prior to this period, the Viscountess Glenorchy, on whose mind religion had taken a deep hold, began to devise schemes for the diffusion of that Gospel which she had found the power of God to her own salvation. In union with her friend Lady Maxwell, with whom I was personally acquainted, and from whom I had many interesting details, relative to the spread of the Gospel in Scotland, she formed the design of opening a place of worship, in which ministers of various denominations, who held the essential truths of the Gospel, might preach. This chapel was partly supplied by the clergymen and probationers of the city and neighbourhood, and partly by the Rev. John Edwards, of Leeds, and the Rev. T. Grove, of Walsall, two eminent dissenting ministers, and well-known supplies at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road chapel, London. From the letters of Lady Glenorchy, I find she frequently applied to Lady Huntingdon, not only for supplies for the chapel which she had hired, but also for such as she could recommend for a settled minister. The Rev. Joseph Townsend, of Pewsey, Rev. Dr. Peckwell, Rev. Richard De Courcy, and the Rev. Erasmus Middleton, were sent by the countess, or recommended by her, as able and popular preachers, whose ministrations might prove eminently useful in diffusing the light of the Sun of righteousness. After her new chapel was erected, the same system was pursued; and Lady Glenorchy had many difficulties to contend with, in the settlement of a pastor, which caused her much uneasiness, as will be seen by the following extract from one of her letters to Lady Huntingdon:—

"Your ladyship's kind offer of assistance I most thankfully acknowledge, and feel most grateful for your long-continued friendship and advice. The chapel I have erected will soon be ready for the reception of a congregation, and I am most desirous of having a minister of approved character and abilities. The Presbytery of Edinburgh have given me infinite trouble, and caused me considerable perplexity. Mr. Grove is a gentleman of good address and excellent ministerial talents; but, as I cannot see my way clear to separate my chapel from the Church of Scotland, with which all my family and my oldest and best friends are connected, he has, though with great reluctance, determined on returning to England.

"And now, my dear madam, I would most earnestly consult you, as to the best mode of proceeding; for I really am so hurt and so perplexed by the clamour that has been raised, that I have had serious notions of leaving Scotland altogether. I have heard very favourable accounts of some of your students, particularly Mr. Clayton, and Mr. Aldridge, and Mr. Crole; and if you can recommend any of those, as suitable for the diffusion of divine truth in Edinburgh, I shall endeavour to give up all my own plans, with reference to the chapel, content to follow whatever seems most likely to promote peace in the church of Christ. The character and talents of Mr. Clayton, I have been informed, are of a very high order. Do you think it probable that he might answer, in the situation of pastor of the congregation? Is he eligible to fill such an important post? I am most anxious to accomplish this matter with as little delay as possible; and have sought the advice of the Chief Shepherd and Head of the church, to guide me in the choice of a minister. From what your ladyship has written to me, and from what I have heard from others, I am inclined to form a very favourable opinion of Mr. Clayton, in preference to any of your other students; though I am bound to believe them men of equal piety, and zeal, and devotedness in the cause of their Divine Master. Any minister coming from England will have much larger congregations to preach to than they can have in their own country, except they are invited to Tottenham Court Road chapel or the Tabernacle; and the sphere of usefulness they will have here they can form no opinion of, without having seen it. I make no apology for giving your ladyship all this trouble, knowing how your heart is set upon forwarding the work of God, and the spread of His glorious Gospel, in this as well as in your own country.

"I cease not to lament the death of my very dear friend and pastor, Mr. Sheriff. His last words were, '*All is well.*' I was enabled to attend to him, during the last two days and nights of his life, for which I feel most thankful; and though I grieve for my loss, yet I have felt great support, and have had given me great power to believe and acquiesce in the wise disposal of God. Never shall I forget his last words, his dying exhortations to submit to the Lord's will. O happy, happy soul! now in the presence of Him whom he adored, and whose Gospel he so faithfully proclaimed. May my end be like his!

"Mr. Walker, of the High Church, has given me great assistance, and has preached frequently in the chapel. He is a very excellent man, and esteems your ladyship very highly for your work's sake. Other ministers also have proffered their help. Miss Hill has been very, very kind in writing to me; and her letters have been most consolatory, urging me to bear all the dispensations of God with patience and resignation.

"To the care and protection of God I now heartily commend your ladyship. And believe me to be, more than I can express, your sincere and affectionate friend,

"W. GLENORCHY."

Disappointed in her expectations of procuring an eligible minister in Scotland, Lady Glenorchy appears to have followed up her application to Lady Huntingdon by deputing one of the chief managers of her chapel to visit London, in order to prevail on Mr. Clayton, or some other of the students at Trevecca, to visit Scotland, with a view to his settlement, as minister of her chapel, in Edinburgh.

Some of the circumstances attending Mr. Clayton's rejection of Lady Glenorchy's offer, and the final settlement of Dr. Thomas Snell Jones, who had received his education at Trevecca, are to be found in the well-written life of her ladyship by her chaplain, and likewise in the following letter from Lady Glenorchy to Lady Huntingdon, which, like most of her letters, was without the date of the year, but must have been written in 1779, about the period when Mr. Clayton was ordained pastor of the congregation at the Weighhouse:—

"MY DEAR MADAM,—My mind has been so wholly taken up with the affairs of my chapel, and the settlement of an eligible minister, that I have not had a moment to reply to your last kind favour, for which I thank you a thousand times, as I most heartily do for your very great kindness to me, in all my difficulties; aiding me by your excellent advice, and assisting me by your prayers. As you are acquainted with the particulars of the failure of my negotiations with Mr. Clayton, I shall not dwell upon that subject any further than to express my sincere regret that he did not accede to my request. May the blessing of the Great Head of the church rest upon his labours, amongst the people of his choice; and may he experience the richest manifestations of the Spirit of God in his own soul, enabling him rightly to divide the word of truth. He must ever have my high respect and esteem.

"At your ladyship's suggestion I turned my attention to Mr. Jones, who visited Scotland, at my solicitation, in order to supply my chapel; and I have now the pleasure to inform you that the result has been most satisfactory. His preaching was much approved by the people; and, at the united request of the managers and congregation, I made him an offer to become the minister of my chapel, which he has kindly consented to accept; and I trust he will come to us in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

"Dear Lady Maxwell and Lady Henrietta unite in invoking on your head every spiritual blessing, and I return a hundredfold all the prayers and good offices you have bestowed on your much-obliged and affectionate friend and servant,

"W. GLENORCHY."

And here I must close my brief details. But you who have undertaken the subject, and are so much better qualified than myself, with materials more abundant, will, I trust, adorn Mr. Clayton's memory with trophies of more excellent workmanship. The preceding sketch contains a true, and I hope characteristic, portrait of my venerable friend, which those who best knew him will vouch as authentic. At his first settlement in London I dare not say how few ministers were found labouring within the strict pale of orthodoxy; but at his death the number of faithful Gospel ministers, or those whom he, and every one who truly loves and honours his memory, esteem such, was amazingly increased. The happy impulse given by his labours most abundantly tended to accelerate the movement. Hundreds are now labouring in the like cause, and with the like zeal; and if we cannot say with equal ability, yet with true purpose of heart, and signal blessing on their endeavours. A mighty spirit has been stirred up round about; the most vigorous exertions are making to extend the knowledge of the doctrine of a crucified Saviour; to erect the standard of His cross in every city, and every obscure village, in the kingdom; and God, our God, will, I doubt not, give His blessing.

Chapter XII.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON, JUN.—I.

CHOICE OF THE MINISTRY.—ENTERS HOMERTON COLLEGE.—STUDIES IN EDINBURGH.—LABOURS AS ASSISTANT MINISTER AT NEWBURY.—REMOVES TO KENSINGTON.—ORDINATION.—HIS FATHER'S CHARGE.—ILLNESS.—MARRIAGE.—SETTLEMENT AT CAMOMILE STREET.—LONDON MINISTERIAL LIFE.—EARLY RISING.—CHILDREN'S HOURS.—ECLECTIC SOCIETY.—ANECDOTE OF THE REV. J. NEWTON.

HAVING brought down these records of the elder Mr. Clayton to a period, when he had passed the full meridian of life, it may be well to leave him for awhile, and trace the several currents of existence and action pursued by his three sons, as these currents diverge from the parent stream. While that still continued to flow on, full and majestic in its course, diffusing on either side varied blessings, making many a spot, that might otherwise have been a wilderness and a solitary place, glad, and transforming the moral desert into a garden of the Lord, those that parted thence became no less noticeable and beneficent. They very soon found channels for themselves; and, widening and deepening rapidly, bade fair to equal, if not excel, in volume and in vitalizing influences, that from which they had issued forth. They were destined, for the most part, to flow on, in a direction nearly parallel with the main stream; for London, or its immediate neighbourhood, became the scene of the labours of all three sons; of the two elder, throughout the whole course of their pastorate, and of the youngest, during the latter part of his ministerial career.

In noticing these in their natural order, Mr. John Clayton claims our attention, primarily. He was the firstborn child of the family, and the last surviving member thereof; having been summoned to the sad task of following every one of his brothers and sisters, as well as his venerable parents, to the grave.

When Mr. Clayton's sons left the school at Wallingford, John was about fifteen years of age. In a fragment of a memoir, which he wrote of himself, but which he afterwards partially destroyed, he says, referring to this period of his life: "My parents, perceiving that I had for some time addicted myself to private prayer, and reading of the Scriptures and other good books, often conversed with me as to the trade or profession I should wish to pursue. I had little choice of my own; and a slight persuasion would have induced me to follow almost any business which might have been recommended to me. I was requested to take six months to consider the subject; and one or two efforts were made, during that period, to place me in a counting-house, but without success. My mother was wont, occasionally, to drop hints, as to the work of the ministry; to which I learned, afterwards, that she had devoted me, at the time of my birth, with humble submission to the will of God."

The great Lord of the temple heard that mother's prayers, as He did those of Hannah. Like the wife of Elkanah, she could say, as she brought her son to the altar of God, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. AND HE WORSHIPPED THE LORD THERE." The sanctuary was to be the scene of his labours. He was to "minister unto the Lord."

His own mind—under a divine impulse, of whose first workings he was probably utterly unconscious—soon became deeply impressed with the conviction that that was the service on earth to which God had called him; and for this he resolved, by a suitable course of preparation, to strive and qualify himself. He was sent to the Old College, Homerton, where he continued for some time, pursuing the usual course of study required of the alumni of that institution.

While here, his first sermon was preached in his father's chapel, at the Weighhouse, from the text (Acts xx. 24) which that father chose for the foundation of his address, when, some years later, he delivered the charge to his son, on the day of his ordination. The words selected were a faithful exposition of his estimate of the importance of the work on which he had entered; and his whole subsequent history was one prolonged illustration of the spirit and temper of the apostle who said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

In common with his brother students, he was engaged in preaching to different congregations, in and around London, as their services were required; and the young and eloquent pleader for truth speedily became one of the most popular of the "sons of the prophets." But it was soon felt, both by himself and his father, that a broader and more solid intellectual foundation than had been laid was necessary, if stability of mental character, and affluence, rather than poverty, of attainments were deemed desirable. To this end it was necessary, not only that he should "meditate on these things," but "give himself *wholly* to them," for a season, that his "profiting might appear unto all."

At this time, and for more than half a century afterwards, Oxford and Cambridge were entirely closed against the honest and faithful Nonconformist; and John Clayton was therefore necessitated to enter as a student at the university of Edinburgh, attending especially the logic and moral philosophy classes. In that city his studies were directed by his father's old college companion at Trevecca, and his intimate friend through life, Dr. Jones, the minister of Lady Glenorchy's chapel.

But it so happened, that, in seeking to avoid the dangers incident to too much early preaching, before the mind of young Clayton had attained sufficient culture and stamina,—and which dangers especially threatened him in London, where he was so well known, and where the congregations that would be likely to seek his services were far more numerous than in the northern capital—he was exposed to others, of which the thoughtful parents had not dreamed. They saw the Scylla, and strove to avoid them; but were not aware of the Charybdis that was seething at a distance. This was, however, revealed to them by an incident, to which many parents would not perhaps have attributed any great importance, though with Mr. and Mrs. Clayton it was otherwise.

While at Homerton their son's movements were all observable; and the way in which his leisure hours were spent was as well known to them, as was that of his studious ones. At Edinburgh, however, it was impossible to exercise the same oversight of the youth; and from his native geniality of disposition, his gentlemanly manners, and exuberant cheerfulness, which made him a great favourite with all whom he visited, his company was much sought. The usual results followed; in his participation in certain amusements, which, at home, had never been allowed; which at the best were of an equivocal character, and were certainly utterly inconsistent with the ministerial office.

In inspecting the young student's wardrobe, on his return home after the session, his mother observed certain stockings of white silk, together with dancing shoes. Her curiosity was awakened; and she inquired whether he had been in the habit of attending balls, and other frivolous amusements. Having ascertained the fact that he had frequently done so, and that this was the general practice of the Christian circles in Edinburgh, she instantly took the alarm; conceiving such pastimes, however regulated by a regard to decorum, to be a very unfit preparation for the pulpit, and a most incongruous prelude to a life which, she fondly hoped, would be devoted to the service of God, in proclaiming the mystery of redeeming grace to a perishing world. Having communicated her apprehensions to her husband, they consulted together, upon the best measures to be adopted for snatching the beloved youth from the vortex of worldly gaieties; and not knowing whereunto this beginning of things might grow, they resolved that he should not again return to Edinburgh. The announcement of this determination was, in the course of the ensuing summer, made to Dr. Jones, and the name of his young friend appeared no more in the college lists.

That his parents did not err, in the estimate they formed of the dangers to which his residence in Edinburgh exposed him, is evident from his own recorded opinion nearly half a century afterwards. He says:—

"I cannot say, however, on a calm review of my residence in Scotland, that my highest interests were advanced. I had continual returns of strong convictions. I attended, with undeviating regularity, the house of God on the Sabbath; but my retired devotions were very superficially regarded, and I was painfully harassed with doubts, as to the reality of my personal religion. Some of my studies, and the influence of some of my companions, dissipated my better impressions; and my goodness was like that of Ephraim, as the morning cloud, soon dispersed by the wind, or the early dew, quickly dried up by the beams of the sun. Nevertheless, I became better acquainted with theology; and the foundation for future improvement in that department was most firmly and deeply laid."

The opening months of the nineteenth century, so prolific of events the most momentous to all the nations, found the young student again pursuing his studies under the paternal roof, and waiting for the rising and moving of the pillar of cloud, that was to indicate the will of that Leader, under whose banners he had enrolled himself.

He and his more experienced father were deeply sensible of the perils that beset the youthful warrior of the cross, in the outset of his career, and of the unadvisedness of one so very young taking upon himself the sole responsibility of leading others into the very thick of the conflict, in which the advocates of truth and the adherents to error were engaged. They therefore looked round for a sphere of action, where he could enjoy the benefits to be derived from witnessing daily proofs of the practised skill of some veteran leader in the army of the living God, and profit by the details of his lengthened experience.

At this time the Rev. John Winter, of Newbury, requiring help in the work of the ministry, Mr. John

Clayton was introduced to his notice, and, after having preached a few Sabbaths on probation, was invited, by the aged pastor and his people, to take upon him the office of assistant preacher, which offer was cordially accepted. Mr. Clayton regarded it as a happy arrangement of divine providence, that his firstborn should thus commence his public labours, in conjunction with an elder minister, so sound in his sentiments, so gentlemanly in his habits, and so thoroughly respected for his talents, moral character, and usefulness.

His residence at Newbury, however, did not extend to a very lengthened period. From the first, it was never contemplated that he should take up his permanent abode there; but, as has been intimated, the advantages of a temporary association with one who had been for some years familiar with all the duties and difficulties of the pastoral office were duly appreciated; and in due time these were obtained.

In comparative retirement, as a country minister, with only a partial responsibility, and a division of labour that afforded more time for other studies than those which were necessary for each Sabbath's duties, he spent several of the happiest and most useful months of his life. By means of those spiritual exercises, in which the young athlete here engaged, he was gradually acquiring the skill and strength which would qualify him to appear with honour and applause in a wider arena, and before a greater and more critically observant cloud of witnesses. As with Samson, so with him, "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan," in a division of "the sacramental host of God's elect," at some distance from the main body; but the time was close at hand for his appearing to Israel, in the high places of the field of action.

It was in 1801, when Mr. John Clayton had attained his twenty-first year, that the Congregationalists at Kensington, whose former minister was the Rev. Dr. Lake, invited him to assume the pastoral office amongst them. This step indicated a high estimate of the talents and character of the young minister, who, at an age now frequently reached, before a five years' curriculum is *begun*, was invited to preach to, and to preside over, a most respectable congregation.

The village of Kensington was honoured, as the abode of royalty; and although within an hour's walk of the great city itself, was, with its neighbouring noble parks and gardens, as rural a retreat as though it were a hundred miles from town. Its proximity to London enabled many of its denizens to carry on their occupations in the crowded marts of commerce in the day, and retire to the quiet repose of the village in the evening. Of this intelligent class a goodly portion of the congregation, that now felt desirous to secure Mr. John Clayton's services, was composed. The event proved that the people who gave the invitation were fully alive to the importance of the step which they had taken, and were perfectly justified in the belief they entertained, that "this same should comfort" and instruct them in the ways of God.

On leaving Newbury, the following communication, addressed to his father, by the Rev. John Winter, with whom Mr. John Clayton had been associated, will show the estimate entertained of the young minister by him :—

"Rev. and dear Sir,—I should very justly accuse myself of impropriety, were I to part from your son without putting into his hands a letter of acknowledgments to you, for the high treat which you have for twelve months afforded me and my congregation, by permitting him so long to reside among us, and partake with me in the labours of the sanctuary. This, I can fairly say, he has done with the ability of a theologist and the faithfulness of a minister of Christ. We have had one heart and one spirit; and have unitedly to rejoice that the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in our hands. Nevertheless, I see that he has now a call to depart; with a prospect of usefulness, by preaching the Gospel in another place. I therefore readily commend him to the Lord, and the word of His grace; and shall rejoice to hear that all our hopes are realized among the people of Kensington.

"I have likewise to thank you for your kind attention, in looking out for one who may assist us, for a permanence. I hope you will continue your kindness in this respect, till your endeavours prove effectual. None, I am persuaded, would suit us like Mr. George Clayton. But the question is, should we suit him? I can only say that, although in early life I have been led into other habits, I have spent my time among this people, with great satisfaction and success, for more than seventeen years.—I am, dear sir,

"Your very affectionate friend and humble servant,

"JOHN WINTER.

"NEWBURY, *Aug.* 4, 1801."

On the 21st of October, 1801, Mr. John Clayton was ordained in the chapel which, for nearly four years, was the scene of his zealous and faithful labours. The introductory sermon was delivered by the Rev. W. Humphreys, then of Hammersmith; the Rev. W. Nicol, of the Scotch Church, Swallow Street, preached the sermon to the people; and the charge was given by the newly-ordained minister's father, from Acts xx. 24.

This charge was a most faithful and solemn exposition of ministerial duties, enforced with amazing vigour and pungency of expression; indeed at times there was a trenchant fearlessness of utterance, almost amounting to invective, against time-serving, hesitating, cowardly preachers, who kept back the truth, or proclaimed smooth things, to gratify graceless spirits. The following extract will illustrate these remarks:—

"I have not language of indignant severity sufficiently strong to express the contemptible cowardice, hypocrisy, and soul-murdering cruelty of those who adopt an indefinite phraseology, in order (such is the plenitude of their prudence and moderation) that none may suspend their devotion, but that a heterogeneous mass of nominal Calvinists and real Arians and Socinians may be assembled (for united they cannot be) in one society. Frost unites sticks and stones, moss, leaves, and weeds; the sun separates them. Into the secret of that frosty liberality may you, my son, never enter, and to the assembly of its advocates never be thou united.

"Your testimony is to contain nothing but the truth. Sermons should not consist in declamation, but be calculated to convey solid instruction. You must teach, and not trifle away time, in exhibiting fine thoughts, or playing upon words. Let not your testimony be encumbered with what is foreign. Be like Paul, who could say, 'Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have obtained mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

"Your testimony should be borne with zeal; in the heat of which do not lay aside Christian meekness towards opposers. At the same time take care that you do not grow lukewarm and indifferent, under the specious pretext of meekness. An unfaithful, accommodating pastor perhaps applauds himself for carrying it fair with all sorts of people; whereas this peaceable kind of preaching, in neither condemning heretics and worldly-minded persons, nor being condemned by them, is no other than a sign of his being himself in a state of condemnation and death. That person betrays the truth who ceases zealously to defend it, or to oppose its professed adversaries; either from fear of giving occasion of offence, or through a false love of peace. The shepherd should not only *feed* the flocks, but also *drive away* the grievous wolves."

But equally earnest and faithful was the preacher, when he referred to the people:—

"Guard," said he, "against hindrances to progress, which may arise out of your charge. Those already in communion, so far as my information extends, promise to be a comfort to you; and will, I am persuaded, concur in any regulations calculated to promote the religious prosperity of this society, and the furtherance of the Gospel in this neighbourhood. Characters, however, from whom we cannot withhold commendation, are liable to mournful changes; since St. Paul himself had reason to complain of some at Galatia, who, though they were ready at one time to pluck out their eyes for him, yet afterward became his enemies, because he told them the truth. Should you meet with a similar revolution in characters, from the same cause, do not be discouraged at the melancholy and mortifying occurrence, as though some strange thing had happened to you.

"Versatility and inconstancy enter into the constitution of human nature; and as the discipline of prevention is better than that of cure, a scriptural caution should be observed in the admission of members to your communion. Persons who are equally ready to take a place at the card-table and the table of the Lord,—who express an attachment to the house of God, and not less practically love the playhouse,—who affect a plan of life which their legitimate resources will not support,—who profess to value the future world above all things, and yet allow the present to gain such an ascendency over them that they have no time for closet devotion, or any family instruction or worship; all these have slender pretensions indeed to Christianity. Professors of this worldly cast, admitted into the church, will hinder you in your course. Should you preach like an apostle on the Sabbath, if the communicants be counteracting, by their conduct in the week, your salutary instructions, little good will be done by your most strenuous and diligent endeavours in this place. As a wise master-builder, select, therefore, proper materials."

Deep were the emotions of the parents of the young pastor, who were thus privileged to witness his public designation to the service of Christ in the ministry of the Word. Their fondest wishes gratified; their loftiest ambition reached; their fervent and long-continued prayers answered;—they returned to their home rejoicing, and glorifying God, who had done such great things for them.

For a year and a half nothing occurred to interrupt the young minister's labours and usefulness; but at the end of that period, a dangerous affection of the knee joint, arising from an accident while riding, rendered it imperatively necessary that he should cease, for a while, from the active use of the limb; and, in order to be near Mr. Pearson, an eminent surgeon of that day, a lodging was taken for him in Golden Square. For a while the aspect of things was very serious; and it was once thought that he would be lame for life; but a divine hand appeared on his behalf, and by slow degrees a cure was effected.

During this time his brother George and other ministers supplied the lack of service of the young and afflicted pastor; while he, in comparative solitude, was learning, from a gracious teacher, better lessons than a whole library of divinity could have taught him. No one more than himself—no one so much as himself—saw the necessity for the infliction of a thorn in the flesh, to counteract or sanctify the buoyant tendencies of his nature; and with childlike submissiveness he bowed to the stroke of his heavenly Father, knowing it was sent in love.

Happily recovered from this affliction, he prepared his house for the reception of another inmate, who was for thirty-six years to be his faithful companion, the mother of his children, and the self-denying and watchful minister's helpmeet; the divider of his sorrows, and the multiplier of his joys. On May 12th, 1803, he was married to Miss Sarah Ellis, a lady in every way fitted for the important post to which the providence of God had called her; and whose labours in connexion with her husband's ministerial charges, were of that silent, unostentatious, and yet valuable character, which is the noblest testimony to excellence; and which wins an encomium like that which was passed on the virtuous woman of Solomon:—"Her price is above rubies; the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil; she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

In 1804, Mr. John Clayton passed through some anxieties, on account of a debt that appears to have existed, in connexion with the chapel at Kensington, for which, or for a portion thereof, he appears to have been partially responsible. It was, however, soon reduced to a small sum, for which a few of the people became surety; and so his mind—which ought never to have been allowed to be disturbed by such an anxiety—was set at rest.

The next year the congregation meeting in Camomile Street, London, invited him to become their minister;

and after a connexion with his Kensington friends, which had existed for nearly four years, he felt it his duty to separate from them, and take up his abode among a people to whom the pillar of divine providence had directed him, and with whom, for forty years, it was to be his privilege to live and labour. On April 4th, he commenced his stated ministry in London; transferring his residence from the western to the eastern suburbs.

The village of Hackney, like its opposite neighbour at Kensington, was a rural retreat for opulent citizens. Its population at that time was scarcely one-twentieth of the present number. Corn-fields then, and until a quarter of a century ago, lay between the Downs and London; and he who walked from Hackney to Islington passed through pleasant meadows, fragrant with wild flowers, and along paths skirted by hawthorn bushes and alders; while amidst tall elms and oaks a chorus of singing birds made music all day long, and at night the melody was repeated; for the late Mr. Campbell, of Kingsland, about the period now referred to, speaks of the pleasure with which he listened to the song of the nightingales, in Dalston fields! "They sing most charmingly," he says; "God seems to have designed them to cheer the gloom." Here it was that Mr. Clayton and his young wife located themselves; and here for many years, though in various dwellings, he continued to reside.

It is somewhat difficult to realize London when Mr. John Clayton became one of its ministers,—for "'tis sixty years since," and everything has so completely changed. This is as true, in relation to the social and religious condition of the place, as to its streets and buildings, which in many localities are so metamorphosed, that an exile of a quarter of a century would have the greatest difficulty in recognizing what to him had once been familiar spots. But still the position of a preacher of the Gospel, as far as his purely ministerial and pastoral duties are concerned, is much the same now as then, as it regards the *nature* of the demands made upon him, though not as to the *extent* thereof. There was, probably, more time devoted to the visitation of the people than is now expected, or is possible. Business was not quite so absorbing, as in the present day; and the admission of a minister into the counting-house, or shop, of one of his hearers, would not awaken so much surprise as there is reason to believe it would now. Then, merchants could find time to retire into their private room, and hold a quarter of an hour's talk with their pastor, on the best of all subjects; and not resent the intrusion. Many, too, of the attendants in city churches or chapels lived at their houses of business; so that if the master of the family could not greet the pastor, other members of the household would, and looked for such visits with interest and expectation.

Mr. John Clayton was particularly qualified for this work. His courteous manners, his ever-cheerful spirit, and ready wit—which, however, were never suffered to transgress due bounds,—his admirable and easy conversational powers, his fund of anecdote, and apt quotations, made him a welcome visitor to young and old; while his genuine and unostentatious piety, his hearty sympathy, and Christian tenderness towards all who were in "anywise afflicted, in mind, body, or estate," proved him to be a disciple of the Master "who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and made him an acceptable companion in the sick chamber and at the bed of death.

Whole days were spent by him in these engagements; and often he has returned home thoroughly exhausted, by the incessant strain upon his physical and mental and emotional powers; for he had frequently to travel great distances, along the crowded streets of London, in order to discharge his pastoral functions; the reputation of the preacher having brought hearers from different parts of the metropolis; all of whom had, or thought they had, a claim upon his special regard.

The recorded experience of one of the most indefatigable of London pastors, on this subject, may be of service both to ministers and their people, who dwell in large towns or cities. On one of the fragments of the diary, before mentioned, he writes:—

"My greatest difficulty in ministerial, or rather in pastoral engagements, was connected with what is termed pastoral visitation. When our numbers were smaller, I was able to see most of my people once or twice in the year; and to pay almost countless visits to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and dying. To this work I devoted two days in the week; often walking and riding many miles in the day, and praying, from twelve to twenty times, and more, with various members of my flock. But I found this procedure impracticable, at the Poultry chapel. I therefore tried to divide my people into districts; but sometimes found that one required five times as much attention as the other; and one complained if I did not to a great degree equalize my visits to all. I obtained the aid of some of the deacons and members, but ascertained that many were dissatisfied, unless they saw the minister. I fixed days and hours of meeting, that those who wished to consult me on any subject might come, either to my house, or the vestry; but, after a little while, comparatively few came. I adopted other expedients, but none worked perfectly; and after years of diversified attempts, I was driven to the conviction, that in a dense population, as in the metropolis, and large cities and towns, and in a sphere in which there is nothing parochial, but in which the congregation is very widely dispersed, the pastor must consult locality, the habits of the people, and must particularly attend to the poor and afflicted; endeavouring to see and visit others, *as circumstances will allow.* There are two extremes he must try to avoid—that of neglect of a considerable mass, and that excessive visitation, which absorbs too much time, and deprives him of the opportunities of making preparation in his study, for the intelligent and varied exercises of the pulpit. This combination of a practical regard to my flock in their houses, and to the requirements of sanctuary services, often involved me in perplexity, and was carried on sometimes at a great sacrifice of physical power."

But the character of his public ministrations showed that no attention to this, or any other part of the pastor's duties, was allowed to stand in the way of suitable preparation, mental and spiritual, for the great work of preaching. He knew the primary obligation of a shepherd in Israel; the "pastor according to God's heart" was to "FEED the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, with knowledge and understanding;" and he did not expect to be able to communicate to others until, by conscientious and painstaking diligence, he had first sought and secured for himself those stores, from which the wants of others could be supplied.

Although possessed of a remarkable fluency of speech, which to its possessor is sometimes a great snare, he never suffered himself to be beguiled into the neglect of making a provision of some kind or other for all his public services. It was with him a maxim, that he would not offer to God or his people a sacrifice that cost him nothing. He was ever anxious to present the firstlings of the flock, and the finest of the wheat, to the Lord; to bring the freshest and best thoughts he could conceive, the results of profound and prayerful meditation on divine things, wherewith to edify, and strengthen, and comfort his people.

Through the whole of his ministerial life he was a diligent theological student; not unmindful of the valuable contributions to our religious libraries, to which the present century has given birth—for he ever kept himself abreast of the current literature of the day,—but especially delighting in the society of the giants in theology, who, by the overruling providence of the Great Head of the church, were directed to go down into the mines of divine truth, and dig thence the gold and gems of priceless worth, which succeeding ages, to whom another kind of work was assigned, might contemplate, and polish, and wear, and use. The old divines were not so much men of action as men of thought. Participating, by a few weeks' perusal, in the results of months and years of earnest study, the present generation are able to devote more time to those duties that now demand attention and active effort, but to which these thoughtful and holy men, comfortably ensconced, from Monday till Saturday, in their studies, had no call, and of which they certainly had no conception.

Considering the great amount of work which Mr. John Clayton performed, in the way of preaching, as well as of pastoral visitation—for his popularity led to his being invited, in all directions, to anniversaries, and ordination services, and to plead the cause of the missionary and Bible societies, and different philanthropic institutions,—one marvels how all could have been done, and done so well. But an explanation of his capacity for multifarious and diversified labours is afforded, by the fact of his being very methodical in his distribution of time, and systematically and invariably an early riser. He had learned this from his venerable father. Every morning, at five in summer, and six in winter, he was to be found in his study, engaged either in reading or writing. His correspondence was usually gone through during these early hours; and often his family, when they came in to worship, at eight o'clock, would find twenty letters on the mantelpiece, waiting to go to their destination.

It was well for him that he had a pen as facile as his tongue was eloquent, for terrible demands were made upon it. And it would be well if people generally, in the present day, would remember, that ministers of any standing must, of necessity, have a large correspondence, and so be merciful and moderate in their expectations of replies, especially on *their* business. It might not be amiss, either, if they would try to recollect that a penny post is by no means a cheap institution for all persons; but often a serious expense to public men, from the want of a little thought on the part of those who desire to be benefited by their services. "This is also a sore evil."

Years passed, with multiplying evidences of usefulness to the pastor in Camomile Street. In May, 1809, he was chosen to preach one of the anniversary sermons of the London Missionary Society, at the Tabernacle: an honour which was subsequently shared in by his brothers George and William; the only instance of the kind in which three members of one family, sustaining the fraternal relationship toward each other, were called upon to engage in such special services for this great missionary institution.

By degrees Mr. Clayton's family increased, and the education of his children was a new care added to those pertaining to the ministerial office. In the duties of home he had an admirable helper in his wife, who loved to lighten the burden which often rested heavily on her husband; and by her spirit, temper, and devotion to his welfare, chased away many a furrow that would otherwise have written itself on his brow.

Mr. Clayton was—what is not always the case with men in his position—as much the light and life of his own family as he was of his people. While every day interested in all that concerned his children, and always glad to associate with them, as his duties would allow, he set apart every Saturday afternoon for them, exclusively. That was their weekly holiday at home, to which they always looked forward with delight. Directly after an early dinner, if the weather was fine, they sallied forth into the country, around and beyond Hackney; and spent the hours till tea-time in wandering among green fields, gathering wild flowers and binding them into chaplets; or running races, in which the father was as earnest and active as his young people. When the weather was unfavourable, the playroom was the scene of their romps; and, amid shouts and laughter, he was made to do suit and service to the little playful tyrants, who, during these pleasant saturnalia, usurped a temporary sovereignty over the minister and parent.

At six o'clock, however, all noise was hushed. "That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on;" and that he might make ready for its coming, with all its sweet solemnities, Mr. Clayton sought the retirement of his study, for the rest of the evening; and gave the last hours of the week to solemn self-scrutiny, and to those "preparations of the heart" which he believed to be a preacher's best and most fitting prelude to the right "answering of the tongue."

Mr. Clayton's official position in London brought him frequently into contact with ministers of other denominations, and with several estimable clergymen he formed close friendships, with which no difference of opinion on ecclesiastical matters interfered.

The meetings of the Eclectic Society, of which his father was a member, and to which he was introduced in the early part of his ministry, afforded him excellent opportunities for the cultivation of the amenities of Christian life, with those who were in communion with other branches of the church of God; and offered a healthy stimulus to his intellectual powers—these meetings never being allowed to degenerate into mere gossip; but given subjects being considered, and each one in his turn expected to offer the results of his reflection upon them.

With none whom he met there was he on more friendly terms than with the Rev. John Newton, with whom, from his boyhood, he had been a favourite; and one of the greatest treats that could be offered to him and his brothers, was to breakfast with the venerable old man, whose quaint, and shrewd, and sensible remarks on men and things were calculated to interest intelligent youths, just entering upon the busy world. In his latter days certain vagaries were indulged in by some of his brother clergymen, whom he did not spare in his animadversions. He loved the simple purity of the Gospel, without any of the meretricious adjuncts which sometimes foolish, but well-meaning men sought to bring with it. Had he lived in these days, and seen the absurd lengths to which modern ritualists have gone, in making fools of themselves and dupes of their congregations, he would have been still more desirous to obtain a gratification of the wish, of which he spoke one day to his young friend.

"John," said he, "I should like to add one more petition to the Litany."

"Ah! sir," rejoined his companion, smiling; "but you know you can't. If you were an Independent, you could, if you pleased, introduce a dozen."

"Well, well," replied the old man, "perhaps so; but I should be satisfied, just now, as an Episcopalian, with one."

"And what would you add?" inquired Mr. Clayton, whose curiosity was roused.

"Well," said Mr. Newton, "seeing some of my brethren are 'carried about with every wind of doctrine,' as if they had lost their senses, I would pray, 'From all windmills in the head, good Lord, deliver us!'"

Chapter XIII.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON, JUN.—1818-1834.

NEW CHAPEL IN THE POULTRY.—ADDRESS AT THE FOUNDATION-STONE.—OPENING SERVICES.—CHARACTERISTICS OF MR. J. CLAYTON'S PREACHING.—KINDNESS TO POOR MINISTERS.—ANECDOTE.—LETTER TO AN ASPIRANT TO THE MINISTRY.—ADVICE TO HIS DAUGHTERS.—ANECDOTE.—JOINT SECRETARYSHIP OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—REV. W. ELLIS.

TIME continued to roll on, and the congregation at Camomile Street felt the necessity of enlarging their borders. But this was impracticable, in that locality; and Mr. Clayton and his friends contemplated the erection of a new and much larger sanctuary. But where to build was the great difficulty, and one that for some years delayed the execution of their project; until at length, the freehold spot of ground, on which the Poultry chapel now stands, and for which £2,000 were paid to the corporation of the city of London, was decided upon.

According to Mr. Clayton's statement, at the laying of the foundation-stone of the new building, December 17th, 1818, "several of the contiguous places of worship belonging to the Congregationalists were about to be pulled down, without a prospect of being rebuilt;" so that the eligibility of the place selected, for more reasons than one, became apparent.

Speaking of the site they had chosen, Mr. Clayton said, on the occasion referred to,—

"The spot on which we now stand has been subjected to a variety of vicissitudes. For ages, it was occasionally watered by the superfluous tides of that noble river which rolls in our vicinity; and which is a source of health, support, and opulence to the inhabitants of this vast city and the surrounding country. From the scanty information which at this distance of time we are able to gather, it seems to have been occupied as the site of a few insignificant houses, that either fell into decay, or were pulled down, for the erection of a market-place; and this immediately took its name from the fowls which were sold here, to supply the tables of the residents in the metropolis. Long before the citizens had the appointment of their sheriffs, the ground was selected as a central place for a prison; though it is not ascertained in what year the house of confinement was built. Stow, in his *Survey of London*, published in 1618, says, 'Some four houses west of St. Mildred's church is a prison-house, pertaining to one of the sheriffs of London, and is called the "Counter in the Poultrie;" this hath been there kept time out of mind, for I have not read of the original thereof.' But another change awaited the situation on which we stand; and the compter having been removed, we are assembled this morning to lay the foundation-stone of a house, for the worship of Him, who amidst the revolutions of His providence, as well as by the efficiency of His grace, exhibits His high prerogative, 'Behold, I create all things new.'

"It is a fact, not unworthy of notice, that very near to the site of the Poultry chapel, 'Henry Wallice erected, about the year 1281, the first great conduit, to convey sweet water, in pipes under-ground, from Paddington to the city, which was castellated with lead.'* What are the sanctuaries in our metropolis but so many reservoirs? 'the streams from which make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.' May the erection, in which we hope to worship, add to the number of these fountains, which shall refresh and cool the thirsting multitudes who may come to draw water from the wells of salvation! So shall our grateful pleasure burst into a song:

"'What glories were described of old!
What wonders were of Zion told!
Thou city of our God below,
Thy fame shall Tyre and Egypt know.

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* See Chamberlain's *History of London*.

"'Egypt and Tyre, and Greek and Jew,
Shall there begin their lives anew;
Angels and men shall join to sing
The hill where living waters spring.'"

Mr. Clayton's father, and his brother George, offered the devotions of the assembly, on this interesting occasion.

Shortly afterwards, the feet of the silent messenger crossed his threshold; and one of the little band that was wont to gather around his knees was summoned away. He mourned so deeply for the son, thus snatched from the parents who had so fondly nurtured him, that an alarming illness followed, of some months' duration. But from both personal and relative affliction he emerged, as gold from the fire; and with a chastened spirit prepared for the enlarged sphere of usefulness which was opening before him, in the new sanctuary. It was in this year, 1819, he was elected one of the Merchants' lecturers; a post he continued to occupy till the close of his ministry in London.

Everything had succeeded in the erection of the building of the Poultry chapel, which cost £10,000; and it was with feelings of devout joy and thankfulness that arrangements were made for the opening services. These took place on November 17th, 1819, exactly eleven months from the laying of the foundation-stone; and, on this occasion, the Rev. John Clayton, of the Weighhouse chapel; the Rev. Thomas (afterwards Dr.) Raffles, of Liverpool; and the Rev. W. Jay, of Bath; were the preachers. All the sermons were to have been printed; but the numerous engagements and afflictions of the two last-named ministers prevented this intention from being carried out. Mr. Clayton's was published, and is based on the text, Ezekiel xlviii.

35, "And the name of the city from that day shall be, THE LORD IS THERE."

In this sermon he refers touchingly to the change which had passed over the city of London and its inhabitants, since the time when he had first come to settle there:—

> "If such be the nature of that presence with which God favours the evangelical church, let us inquire for what purposes the Lord is there? He is there to repair the ever-wasting population of the city of His abode. Death is constantly removing men from the civil and ecclesiastical distinctions enjoyed in the present world. What changes have I witnessed, since I commenced my ministry in the city of London! I am now the eldest minister but two in our denomination; and there are only two persons living of the church over which I was ordained. In the space of forty-one years, mayors, sheriffs, aldermen, recorders, deputies, common council-men, comptrollers, solicitors, surveyors, sword-bearers, marshal-men, have been swept away from civil citizenship. But the God of providence perpetuates his ordinance of magistracy, and raises up a succession of persons whom he qualifies, to restrain the factious and profligate, and protect the orderly citizens."

There is, throughout this discourse, the same fearless and pointed reference to duties and doctrines, which was wont to characterize his teaching, and which was evidently dictated by some sad experiences he had had of delinquent professors. The concluding portion of it is a favourable specimen of his style, and, as it was about the last publication he sent from the press, it may be given entire:

> "Let me embrace this opportunity of saying a few words to the minister of this place—a freedom which I can take with a son, and for which, therefore, I need offer no apology.
>
> "Your dear mother and I have had the honour of rearing,

educating, and introducing you into active life, which we did, with deep anxiety, with many prayers and tears, noticed by Him who seeth in secret. I baptized you, when an unconscious infant, in the midst of an affectionate and praying congregation; and afterwards had the high satisfaction of receiving you into the church, and dispensing to you the holy sacrament. I gave the charge at your ordination, and addressed you on your settlement at Camomile Street; and now, probably for the last time, I again speak to you, on an occasion that will not soon be forgotten.

"In this ward of the holy city of God you are called to preside, and God is present to witness your behaviour. Be faithful then, as a steward of the mysteries of the kingdom; and commend yourself 'to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God.' A larger place of worship, and more numerous hearers, instead of elating, should alarm and humble you; for these circumstances swell the awful account you will have to give to your great Master. Use the religious time of the congregation with pious care, yea, with fear and trembling; recollecting that you have not more than a few hours in the week, in which you can ministerially deal with immortal souls. Let them be occupied, therefore, with the zealous consideration of essential and saving truth; and let your grand aim be, to break the whole heart, and to heal the broken one. Be not puffed up, because there is not a pew, in this capacious place, unoccupied with attentive hearers. Remember, successful instrumentality and personal religion may exist—apart. It is to be feared that some ministers live on preaching, as some hearers live on hearing,—deceiving their own souls.

"Be encouraged, however, in the discharge of your various duties. God is here. You have had His gracious support in your personal and family afflictions, which have been many and frequent. They have been wisely appointed, as ballast; so that your bark has better cut the waves, and has hitherto, through the favour of the skilful pilot, sailed steadily. May your experience and example contribute to the advantage of your brethren, who may be called to traverse deep waters in stormy seasons! Confide yourself still to that gracious God, who has conducted you through many and sore troubles, and who will strengthen you for your accumulating official engagements.

"The times in which we live are of such a character, that every Christian who occupies a public station needs the special aid of God's Holy Spirit, to stem the torrent of opposition. This is the age of audacity. It is fashionable to attack statesmen, judges, magistrates, and ministers of religion, not only by all sorts of slander and disparaging insinuations, but in language the most indecent and scurrilous. Be not intimidated, should you be thus assailed. Calculate upon such assaults. All ministers of Christ, who have decision in their sentiments, and moral and practical point in their preaching and conduct, will be vilified by heretics who hate 'the truth as it is in Jesus;' by those who seem to be in their favourite element when they are 'speaking evil of dignities;' and by depraved and fraudulent characters, as well as by the multiplied tribe of Antinomian religionists. But never let their profane and vociferous clamours—no, nor the rage of Satan, in any form—daunt your spirit, in the faithful performance of imperious duty. Continually call to remembrance the text which you chose when you first ascended your father's pulpit: 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.'

"I conclude, my dear firstborn, by what has been my prayer from your infancy,—that God would bless you, and make you a blessing; and by conjuring and animating you, in the words of the Great Head of the church: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

"Finally, I would supply a closing thought or two to the congregation. To you who sustain office here, I would state that, in a family consultation which took place, relative to the removal of your minister to Camomile Street, I ventured to say, 'The materials are good, and the little band is so well officered, that you will not be hindered, but helped, in the execution of any plan for the promotion of truth, holiness, and peace.' I am no prophet; yet this prediction has been verified, and is still true. Continue, my esteemed brethren, to stand by your minister, while he adheres to the Word of God, as his rule; and support him by your prayers, and by every good office which Christian love dictates."

A short time sufficed for the noble edifice, which had been erected for Mr. Clayton and his people, to be completely filled. He had now attained the very height of his popularity. Everything combined to insure his acceptableness with the public. He was in the midday of his manhood—for he had not yet passed the fortieth year of his age. He had a fine commanding person, that arrested the eye of the spectator, the moment he ascended the pulpit or platform. Over a countenance, strikingly expressive of openness and candour, might be seen perpetually glinting a smile of sympathy with his audience; while the consciousness that he came as the bearer of a message of momentous importance to those he addressed, always threw over it a slight shade of seriousness, that only added to the dignity and impressiveness of his look and manners. His voice was full and melodious in its intonations—capable of rousing the indifferent and the slumbering, or of soothing the sorrowful and weary. Above all, there was the faithful and earnest representation of Gospel truth—a declaration of the whole counsel of God, "whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear." From his pulpit the trumpet uttered no uncertain sound. Its notes were ever heard, ringing clear, and full, and unmistakable—warning of danger, and summoning to the battle.

Mr. Clayton's style was one which appeared well suited to a public auditory. To some, perhaps, it might seem too redundant, and as bordering a little more on the grandiloquent than a severe taste could approve. But the results showed that it was the best style he could adopt for real effect. His crowded congregations, and—better and more satisfactory than these,—the numerous instances of spiritual benefit, wrought through his instrumentality, bore their testimony to its adaptation for usefulness. He would be most unfairly judged if it were imagined by those who never heard him, but only heard of him, that an inflated verbosity was a conspicuous feature in those exercises; for not very friendly critics sometimes spoke of the "Claytonian style," as if this were its chief characteristic. Beneath all, there was ever a solid substratum of healthy thought, good sound sense, a scripturalness of doctrine that could not be gainsayed, and unaffected piety. The religious public, however much it may be beguiled, for a season, by the advent of some flaming meteor, whose corruscations dazzle and confound, and fling lesser lights into the shade, continues to follow only the clear, steadily-shining radiance that "guides our feet into the way of peace." It can hardly be believed that large and respectable congregations would, for nearly fifty years, have persisted in hearing Mr. John Clayton, unless, amid many defects that might be visible, he had had the main elements of a thoroughly good and effective speaker. So that those who revere his memory are content to leave the verdict, on the matter under consideration, to be determined by the *general* estimate formed of him; and that unquestionably was one the most favourable.

The following passage, from a letter addressed by his father to his daughter, Mrs. Janson, after he had been listening to one of his son's sermons, although it is the opinion of a critic who sustained a near and holy relationship with the preacher, is yet not to be disregarded; as it expresses the deliberate opinion of one who, having been familiar with preachers and orators for nearly half a century, was eminently capable of forming a good judgment on the subject, and whose utterances had always been characterized by a strict adherence to literal truth:—

> "Dear John preached last night, for the Walworth charity schools, and slept here. The partiality of a father out of the question, he is certainly a very superior minister. His strength of thought, ingenuity, and high-raised ardour, awakened my admiration, to no small degree. I had not heard him for a considerable time; I was glad of the opportunity. His pre-eminent talents, and the honour God has been pleased to put upon all your brothers, instead of elating my mind, produce a humble fear, lest any bold temptation should prevail, so far as to sully our characters, and interrupt that usefulness for which many are grateful to the God of grace. It is only in heaven that hearts never grow worse, and reputations never tarnish. Pray for those who stand in high places, which few occupy; that they may know their danger, and take heed lest they fall."

While Mr. John Clayton was reaping the reward of a faithful ministry, in the love and attachment of his people, whose growth in spiritual life it was his honourable ambition and object to promote; and while substantial advantages, of a worldly nature, were not wanting, as the honestly-earned recompense of his untiring labours, he was not unmindful of others, less fortunately fixed than himself. He was truly "a brother born for adversity;" and no one ever sought his aid in vain, unless the character of the suppliant made him unworthy of sympathy. Even that did not always close his heart or hand against the faulty one;

and a stern rebuke of folly or sin was generally accompanied by some solid evidence that the reproof was not intended as a convenient cover, under which to escape from the performance of a deed of charity.

His position, as a pastor in one of the largest churches in London, afforded opportunity for aiding necessitous ministers, by becoming the almoner of the bounty of others; and sharing in the administration of some funds that had been left, long ago, for the relief of "poor ministers of Christ's holy Gospel." But he was not content with this; and for many years gave £100 per annum, out of his own private resources, to comfort the hearts of his brethren, who were often made to feel—and but for his generosity would have felt yet more keenly—the *res angusta domi*. If the prayers and blessings of grateful souls can weave around the benevolent a curtain of quiet repose, then must many of his nights have been very peaceful; for there was scarcely a day in which he did not make some one's "heart to sing for joy." For many years he conscientiously devoted one-sixth part of his entire income to purposes of a religious and philanthropic character; in numerous instances helping largely those whose necessities made a powerful appeal to his generous sympathy.

Mr. Clayton was not only ready to help others, but, as opportunity offered, he strove to make those over whom he had any influence do likewise. He was one day in the Rotunda of the Bank of England, when he saw, standing next him at the counter, one of his own members,—a bachelor, who had long passed the meridian of life,—and who was sweeping up a large number of notes and sovereigns, evidently the proceeds of a dividend warrant he had just handed in.

Astonished at seeing so much money in the hands of one who had never been supposed to possess one tithe of the income this amount indicated, Mr. Clayton said, half earnestly, and half jocularly, "Brother H——, is all that yours?"

The person addressed turned round, as he heard the well-known voice, and said quietly, "Not any one else's, you may be sure."

"Stay," said Mr. Clayton, "till I get my money, and let me walk home with you. I have a pastoral word or two to say." Mr. H—— quietly waited for his minister, and they left the bank together.

Mr. Clayton ascertained that his companion, who made no secret of the matter, was a wealthy man, with few or no claims upon his purse, and he then said:

"My dear brother, can you reconcile it to your conscience to be the possessor of your annual income, and give one solitary guinea to the Missionary Society, another to the Bible Society, and a third, and perhaps a fourth, to some other object? Is this being a faithful steward?" And thus discoursing, he set before his auditor, who listened respectfully, the duty of being "rich towards God."

"I never thought of this before," exclaimed his companion; "I see my fault this day. Help me, and I will remedy it."

And he did. From that time he increased his subscriptions tenfold, in one case fiftyfold; and after a life, from this period, marked by acts of great munificence, he died, bequeathing almost the whole of his property to two of our most valued institutions; and a handsome legacy, though by no means a large one, to his minister; thus testifying his due appreciation of the fidelity of the reproof he had received, and giving a practical evidence of the effectiveness and value of the pastoral tuitions of many years.

While aiding those already in the ministry, he was prepared to give judicious advice to those who were seeking to enter it; a line of conduct which should be more scrupulously followed than, apparently, it is. When one considers the failures of some,—and the number is by no means small,—who have been attracted to the work, without possessing the requisite qualifications, one cannot but wish that there had been more fidelity and judgment exercised on the part of those who encouraged the step, and who are afterwards mortified at the non-fulfilment of their expectations. Happily, in the case of the esteemed brother, the Rev. John Thornton, of Stockport, to whom the following letter was sent,—and who was brought up under good training, at home and in the sanctuary,—no such disappointment ensued; but the appropriateness of the counsel, and the wisdom of the suggestive queries, are not less conspicuous.

"HACKNEY, *Mar.* 18*th*, 1823.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I was very sorry to be from home when you favoured us with a visit, the other day; but you would learn that I was under the necessity of going into the country, with my father, who was, and is still, seriously indisposed.

"My regret, too, was increased when I found, from Mrs. Clayton's statement, the nature of the topic that you wished to discuss, at the interview which you purposed to hold with me,—namely, the desire which you entertain for the Christian ministry.

"I wonder not at this desire. It is what almost all converts to the Saviour feel, more especially in the novitiate of their Christianity. And it is one sign of the possession of love to

HIM, when we are anxious that all should become the participants of His grace.

"As, however, you ask my opinion and advice, I will endeavour to give it to you, with the most transparent honesty and simplicity. And if my cautionary language should not quite correspond with your ardent feeling, attribute it, I pray you, to my friendship; and to my anxious wish that you should not take a step which you might afterwards deplore, and which your valuable parents might also bewail.

"Previously, then, to my entrance on full conversation with you, on the momentous subject, allow me to furnish you with a few questions, which I beg you to press home to your conscience, ere we shall embrace an opportunity for discussion.

"1. Have you, seriously and deliberately, inspected and sifted the motives which influence you, in desiring the ministry?

"2. Have you inquired whether a weariness with secular labour, and a desire for comparative or imaginary repose, have had no powerful influence on your mind?

"3. Have you asked whether a hope of distinction among your fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians, has not presented itself to your ambition?

"4. Have you had any dispute, or quarrel, or misunderstanding, with your employer, or those who may be in his service, which has given you a disgust to your present situation? The fact is, *I have known* persons who have undertaken preparatory studies, and have afterwards stated the above circumstances as having had the ascendency in their mind.

"5. Have you made this topic the subject of frequent and fervent prayer? Not only have you occasionally adverted to it, in your supplications, but have you laid aside any time specifically to spread the case before the Lord?

"6. Have you in some degree attempted to count the cost? I say 'in some degree,' for none know it fully, till they have been for a while employed in the work.

"7. Are you prepared to say that, by God's assisting grace, you can labour for years in previous study?

"8. Can you consent to resign (for the most part) worldly fame, and worldly possessions, and to become the despised, lowly, patient, diligent preacher of 'Christ and Him crucified?'

"I will not at present multiply these inquiries. I know your time is much occupied, and you cannot rescue many minutes for private reflection. Carry, however, I beseech you, these preliminary thoughts and queries into your retirement, and think over them; and when you can gain the opportunity, I shall be most happy, either to wait on you at Mr. Ashton's, or to see you here, whichever may be most convenient or agreeable to you.

"Meanwhile I commend you to the wisdom and grace of God. May Jesus be your counsellor, and then you will not err! I shall not cease to make mention of you in my prayers; and with best respects to Mr. and Mrs. Ashton and family,—I remain, my dear sir, yours affectionately and faithfully,

"John Clayton, Jun.

"Mr. John Thornton."

Reference has already been made to Mr. Clayton's domestic engagements with his children, and to the interest and pleasure he took in their enjoyments. As these children grew up, he became more and more solicitous for their best welfare; and strove, by means of counsel and prayer, to commend to them "whatsoever was true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report."

The document that follows speaks for itself. I rejoice exceedingly in the permission accorded me, of presenting to the public that which was originally written only for the perusal of the dear ones to whom it was sent. It will well repay the attention given to it, and may be read with profit by all the daughters of our households.

"A LETTER FROM A FATHER TO HIS BELOVED DAUGHTERS, AT THE CLOSE OF THEIR MORE REGULAR PROCESS OF EDUCATION.

"My beloved Daughters,—The publicity of my character and station renders it difficult for me to select a quiet and undisturbed hour, for intellectual and religious intercourse with my children. I have, therefore, availed myself of the break of day, and shall devote this morning, before we enter on the ordinary business of the family, to pen down a few thoughts which I am very anxious to impress upon your minds.

"As your eyes pass over the lines which follow, some of them, at least, may appear to refer to subjects of a trivial order, and some to embrace topics very intimately connected with the state of the heart, which none but God can see; yet be assured that I shall advance nothing that is trifling, and nothing which does not spring from the tenderest and most anxious parental love.

"Before I enter on the express and specific theme of this epistle, I must call your attention to the crisis at which you have arrived, in the course of your education. Most of its official forms have now passed away. Your regular instructress has terminated her engagements, and you will only receive the occasional visits of a professional person, to give a finishing stroke to the system which, for three years past, we have diligently pursued.

"There are two dispositions of mind which I am solicitous you should exercise, in reference to educational engagements: the one relates to the *past*, the other to the *future*.

"On taking a retrospect of the past, it becomes you to cherish a spirit of gratitude to God, that your parents have been enabled to secure for you such a training as that you have enjoyed; and that, during the process of tuition, no events have occurred, whether of a physical or moral nature, which have seriously interrupted either your governess or yourselves, in the prosecution of your mutual labours. Disease has not disqualified you; reason has not been eclipsed; the most friendly feelings have been maintained between you and your monitress; and as you met, so have you parted—in the exercise of those kindly affections which so sweeten and adorn the intercourse of life.

"If, my dear girls, you cultivate gratitude for your advantages, it will have a tendency to promote humility; and it will prevent the discovery or indulgence of anything like a contempt of others, who may not have been blessed with privileges resembling your own; and while you will render praise to Him who has appointed the bounds of your habitation, and crowned you with mercies, you will endeavour to imitate Him, 'who had compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way.'

"With regard to the *future*, I entreat you to cultivate a desire for improvement, and to aim at its attainment. Your previous education is only the groundwork on which the superstructure is to be raised; it is not the completion of the building. I have pitied some parents, who have gazed at their children when they have just left school, and have exclaimed, with a mixture of ignorance and complacency, 'They are finished!' when in fact it has been evident to the sober and thoughtful spectator, that they had scarcely begun.

"Knowledge, like the sun, is to shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day. But who can think it is noon when it has just struck *nine?* Principle, like the tree, is daily to take deeper root; to spread its fibrous ramifications beneath the ground, and at proper seasons to open into leaf and bloom; to extend its branches, and thicken its boughs, and bring forth an increasing abundance of fruit.

"Try and acquire a real love for reading—perusing not the mere ephemeral publications which pass through the house from book societies (and one half of which are not worth a glance), but those solid, entertaining, as well as instructive works, which, if life be spared, I shall successively put into your hands. Hitherto you have been educated by others; now you must, in a sense, educate yourselves; and, in proportion as your stock of valuable ideas increases, you will be furnished with materials for reflection—so that solitude will not be irksome; while you will be supplied with a fund to communicate to others; and thus in society your company will be both profitable and pleasant.

"From these prefatory remarks I pass on to the more immediate object which I have in view, which is, to present you with some condensed advice and rules, to which I hope you will take earnest heed; and to render them the more impressive, and that they may be the more easily remembered, I shall arrange them under three divisions:—First, your duties to *God;* Secondly, to the *Family;* and, Thirdly, to *Society* in general.

"First: Your duties to *God.* Commence and close every day with Him. Fail not to read some portion of Scripture, or of such good books as you are furnished with, at your private devotions. Watch against hindrances, which would deprive you of the sacred half hour, both in the morning and in the evening. When you are alone, guard against distractions; vain musings; examining your drawers; looking over your letters, your curiosities, your drawings, or clothes. Resolutely employ the consecrated time religiously—that is, in meditating on the appointed portion which you read, and in bending your knees, and humbly imploring the forgiveness of your sins; the purification of your consciences, by the blood of the cross; the gift of a new heart; and all needful grace to fit you for the duties, the cares, the temptations, and the enjoyments of life. If once you become careless and neglectful of private devotion, you cut the very root of all true excellence, and substantial pleasure, and solid usefulness, in those spheres in which you may be placed.

"Consider, too, when you are in the sanctuary, that you have visited it, not to perform a few formal ceremonies; not as you would go to a picture gallery, or a panorama, to see and to be seen, but to worship God. Endeavour to join with the minister in prayer, to unite in the singing, and to make an application of what the preacher advances to yourselves. You are too well instructed, and, I am happy to add, are too habituated to an outward reverence in the temple, to render any suggestions necessary, as to the manner in which you should behave in the house of God. But I am desirous that you should watch the movements of the mind; and bear in remembrance that no worship is acceptable but that which is offered by the heart; nay, that any other is in reality no worship at all.

"Wherever you are, let this sentence press upon your spirits, 'Thou, God, seest me.' The eye of a parent, of a relative, of a friend, cannot always be upon your person, or your path; but to God the darkness and the light are both alike. He beholds you when alone, as well as in society; and He bids the recording angel register the most retired transactions in which you are engaged. David, in a beautiful composition (the 139th Psalm), brings forward this subject in a very striking manner; and closes the impressive ode with a prayer, which I would often recommend you to prefer, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

"On this branch of my observations and admonitions I will not enlarge; because your religious instruction will still be regarded, so long as you are residents in the house of your parents, as of paramount importance.

"SECONDLY, I would specify some things relating to the *Family.*

"I need not tell you how tenderly you are loved by your parents, and how anxious they feel to promote your welfare and happiness; that amidst their several pleasures there is none which contributes more to their gratification than to see you cheerful, and walking in the right way. If you give them credit for this, it will not only dispose you, in general, to treat them with due respect, and to comply with their wishes, but there are three other effects which will follow. One will be an habitual effort to minister to their comfort, in any of the little and kind offices which arise out of passing circumstances; and especially so to act towards your dear mother, who consecrates so much of her time to you at home, that her domestic burdens may be lightened and her heart cheered. The next is that, satisfied with the disinterested wish of your parents to advance your real interests, you will accept their reproofs, or corrections of your phraseology, manner, and disposition, in the spirit in which they are given. And the last is, that you will discover a spirit of ingenuous frankness, and inform them, in full confidence, of any event which may arise, in which your feelings, your duties, your happiness, or your prospects, may seem to be deeply involved. In this point I may fairly say, 'Imitate our example, and maintain and exhibit that characteristic openness, which is opposed to hypocritical disguise, and which we have studied to preserve in our domestic system.'

"It is probable that one or both of your elder brothers, and certainly Edward (if he be spared), will remain, as partial or entire inmates, in our house, for some time to come. There is, for the most part, a roughness about boys and youths, which your gentleness of demeanour may happily soften and correct. I am grateful that you live harmoniously; but it is desirable for you to avoid all asperity of language and manner which has the *aspect* of a quarrel, though the reality may not exist. Lads who are out the chief part of the day, beaten about in the world, often get vexed with the mortifications to which they have been subjected; and may return home, occasionally, not with the best feelings. Your gentleness will be the best rebuke; and one of the most effective methods of removing that rudeness of mien which embitters domestic life. It will also generally awaken in your brothers a desire to treat their sisters with that tenderness and love, of which they are so fair an example.

"It gives me much pleasure to say that I have noticed in you such a uniform and proper behaviour towards the servants, that I shall merely recommend you to pursue the same line of conduct towards them, which for years past you have observed. The spectacles you have witnessed, in some families, have excited your just displeasure. That undue familiarity which breaks down the order of society, or that contemptuous treatment of servants, as though they were slaves; that unreasonable demand upon them at unsuitable hours and seasons, or that ridiculous and foolish confidence in them, which makes them despise their employers;—of all these, you have had specimens in other households, and against them I hope you will uniformly watch.

"To sum up all that relates to the *family* in few words, I would only add: Cultivate an obliging disposition; and mark when there are little things which can be done to promote the order and peace of home. There are days of bustle and extraordinary labour which will occur, and especially in a house where any of the members are public characters. Many nameless minor efforts may be made by you, especially, to render the home-economy agreeable, and to produce an impression on all around of the advantage of throwing good sense and religious principle into common affairs; till they shall exclaim, 'Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is to see them dwelling together in unity!'

"THIRDLY: I shall detain your attention but a little longer to advert to some parts of your demeanour towards *Society*. For some time you know that birds remain quietly in their nest. As they become fledged they rise upon the wing, flutter about the hedge, the tree, the garden, and the orchard, till at length they fly out into the fields and the woods, and build and provide for themselves. This is the case, too, with our children; who, becoming gradually qualified to take their part in the scenes of life, by degrees also enter into the wide community, and assume the station allotted to them by the providence of God. The *period* of *transition* is however a very critical one, and requires some attentive consideration.

"As it has pleased God to place you in what is termed a respectable station in life, you will find that as you go forth into society, there will be (and more particularly owing to my public avocation) many who will appear to be desirous of your acquaintance. While I would be far from recommending anything like the indulgence of pride, yet I wish you to consider the proper rank and condition which you hold. Be affable and courteous to all; but recollect that all are not suitable as companions and as friends. Your connexions, your education, and your habits, may not correspond with theirs; and association would therefore be productive in the end of mutual unhappiness. It is far more easy to decline acquaintance, than to dissolve it and set it aside.

"In many companies you will meet with inquisitive, impertinent, and prying persons, who will profess to be much interested in the welfare of your family, or of your connexions, and who may ask you rude and improper questions. Learn to be cautious when you are thus assailed; and, before you answer the inquiries of such individuals, pause a moment, and think, 'Shall I wish my reply to be repeated?'

"A minister's house is a sort of magazine, in which is deposited numerous stores. It is impossible but that in your parents' parlour you will hear many histories of characters, and of families, and frequently much to the dishonour of both. Great care should be taken never to detail these things in promiscuous company. A talebearer may be there, and may from a little spark kindle a great flame.

"In process of time, as your circle of association widens, you will receive some marked notice from the opposite sex. You may probably meet with young men of very different dispositions. There are those who are so thoughtless, and even cruel, as to try, by their attentions, to make impressions on your minds, but who care nothing for your persons, or your welfare;—very fools, to whom 'it is sport to do mischief.' Set a strong guard upon your imaginations, lest you suffer wounds which will produce much pain, and which it will be exceedingly difficult to heal. A trifling, giggling, pedantic, fulsome dandy, is often an object to be dreaded, and always worthy of a holy contempt. Upon this important topic, which connects with it misery or happiness through life, let me assure you that it will be found most safe and pleasant to be early and open in your communications to your parents. You know enough of them to be persuaded that their comfort is bound up with yours.

"In our more private and familiar conversations, we have been sometimes called to talk on melancholy examples, in which you have seen the intellectual and domestic happiness of associated life completely sacrificed and lost, and the vigour and hilarity and artless simplicity of youth worn down and extinguished, by a forced dissimulation, by a train of mortifications, and total disappointment. O my much-loved Sarah and Mary, these are beacons to warn you, lest your vessels should founder on such sands, or be split to pieces on such rocks!

"From many of those inconveniences and disadvantages, which commonly attach themselves to the families of ministers, you have been happily exempt. Whether it be in reality a benefit or not, I do not now wait to determine; but the fact is undeniable, that the conspicuous position which we hold attracts the eyes of multitudes towards us, who would never notice us if we walked in some less open and ostensible path of life. This may, however, be turned into a valuable means of personal improvement, and relative usefulness. It may conduce to watchfulness, caution, and circumspection; and it may render a good example more influential on the minds and characters of numerous spectators. Remember, too, my dear girls, that you may, by your dispositions and conduct, seriously obstruct or effectually promote my ministerial success. Be it your concern to exhibit such a valuable and fair specimen of the effect of pious education, that other parents may be constrained to 'train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' and that many may form the resolution, 'We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you.'

"As I have lengthened this letter far beyond the intended limits, I shall not weary you by any additional observations upon another topic of high and holy importance. This shall be reserved for some future communication, if our lives be spared. I close my present epistle, therefore, with two requests: that you would each peruse these lines alone; and that when you have finished them, you would earnestly pray over their contents.

"And now, my tenderly-beloved creatures, I shall fall upon my knees before God, to implore the influences of His Spirit to bless this humble effort of my pen. For, after all, it is His prerogative to reach the heart. I can employ the means of instruction, can plant and water, but He must give the increase. I am conscious that my endeavours to train you up in the way you should go, are marked with much imperfection and deficiency, which He observes; but I can also sincerely say that I have laboured, at every interval of which I could fairly avail myself, and when the service of Christ would allow me, to communicate those instructions which would at once make you wise for this world, and for that which is to come.

"Full many a time, when you have been reposing upon your beds, or gambolling in your pastimes, or conning your lessons, have I been pouring out my fervent supplications for you and your brothers, before God. Full many a tear have I shed over the means which I have used, in the process of your education; and full many a thrill of anxiety makes my breast to vibrate when I am reflecting upon the dangerous world, into the paths of which you are about more fully to enter. The longer I live the less desirous do I feel that any of you should stand high on the lists of fame, or the scale of opulence, in this world; but for *this* I pant, that you may be the 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty'—the subjects of His grace, and the heirs and heiresses of His patrimony.

"There is a veil spread over futurity, which no mortal hand can draw aside. Our prospective destinies, in this world, are quite unknown to all but Him who sees the end from the beginning. Of this, however, I feel assured, that whether you are bound for early death or for long life, the principles instilled into your minds, during your education, are those which will best prepare you for both. If the days of my pilgrimage are to be lengthened, I trust it will be your mother's pleasure and mine to see them illustrated in your characters and course; but should I be shortly called to 'put off my tabernacle,' it is possible that these lines may remain as a memorial of my paternal solicitude, and of those sentiments and practices which I most ardently wish you to adopt and to pursue, when the hand that wrote them shall have crumbled into the dust of the grave.—I remain, my beloved Sarah and Mary, your very affectionate father,

"JOHN CLAYTON, JUN.

"SHORE COTTAGE, *June* 14*th*, 1823."

Another decade passed, in continuous or scarcely interrupted labours. In London, and throughout the whole country, he was ever ready to aid his brethren, in frequent occasional services, and this often at great inconvenience to himself, and to the invasion of the claims of the friendly circle. I remember the energy and tact with which he sought to remedy a mistake he made, more than thirty years ago, in connexion with an anniversary service at Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire. He had failed, through a misconception of the right time, to meet the coach, which then left Bishopsgate Street every morning, at eight o'clock; and found, to his dismay, that no other would leave London, for that part of the country, until the next day, on which the services were to be held. But resolved to do the best he could, to get as far as was possible on his way thither, he bethought himself of the Cambridge coach, which would leave town in the afternoon; and as, on reaching that place, he knew that more than half the distance would have been traversed, he hoped, by some means, to accomplish the rest of the journey.

It was very late in the evening when he arrived at Cambridge; but he was aware that if he could start early the following morning, he might get to Wisbeach by eleven o'clock, the hour fixed for the service; although the distance to be travelled was about forty-five miles, and it was through a fenny country, with not always the best roads. Undaunted, however, he resolved to make the attempt. He inquired at the inn where he was to sleep, whether they knew of any persons who were likely to journey in the direction he wished to go; and was told that an inmate of the house at that moment would leave at four o'clock in the morning, for St. Ives, about twelve miles further on towards Wisbeach. Arrangements were made with this person, and Mr. Clayton retired to rest. At the appointed hour he sallied forth, and found a butcher's cart at the inn door, into which he climbed, and he and his companion drove off. Sundry sounds at the back of the vehicle told him that another passenger beside himself was there; and he found, on inquiry, that he was aiding in escorting a fine fat porker to St. Ives. Arrived there, he hired a post-chaise, and got to March, a town about ten miles from Wisbeach, at half-past eight.

A hasty breakfast was followed by his entrance upon the last stage of the journey; when, to crown his disasters, three or four miles from the place of his destination, the chaise broke down. What was to be done? No help was nigh to repair the broken vehicle; and if there had been it would have consumed more time than he could afford to give. It was now ten o'clock, and it wanted but an hour to the time for commencing the services, for which he had been publicly announced. So without any further delay, leaving his carpet-bag in the post-chaise, to come after him as it could, and promising the driver to send some help speedily from the town, he set off walking; and just as the first hymn was being sung, and the minister of the place was anxiously casting about in his mind what he should do to fill the place of the metropolitan magnate,—for whom he had looked in vain, when he went to the coach-office, the evening before,—the earnestly-desired personage himself appeared, to the no small comfort of his provincial brother; and after apologizing for his lateness, and his unavoidable appearance in his dusty dress, and detailing his adventures, somewhat to the amusement of his auditory, he preached a most animated and admirable sermon, which was vividly remembered, after many years, by those who were privileged to hear it; the antecedents of the discourse probably helping to fasten it the more firmly upon the memories of his auditors.

In 1830, Mr. Orme, the foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society, died, after a short illness, and the office was put in commission, until a suitable successor could be appointed. Mr. Clayton was associated with Dr. Bennett and the Rev. Henry Townley, in discharging the duties of the office, which, if I mistake not, were fulfilled perfectly gratuitously. For more than two years he continued to labour in this new position, the Rev. William Ellis, who had recently returned from the South Seas, being associated with him, during the latter portion of the time. This gentleman was ultimately appointed foreign secretary; a post he filled for some years, with great judgment and indefatigable assiduity; until failing health compelled his resignation. That health became subsequently marvellously restored; and he who believes in the overruling providence of the Great Head of the church cannot doubt, when he contemplates the part which Mr. Ellis has taken during the last ten years in the affairs of Madagascar,—the importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate,—that his has been a charmed life, as was that of the apostle Paul. "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this place." Happily he still continues among his brethren, crowned with honours as with years, his eye not yet dim, and his natural force scarcely abated. It is not only on account of his position and character that this renewed reference is made to him; but to the fact, as a previous chapter in this volume shows, that he stands in an interesting and hallowed spiritual relationship to the Clayton family.

Chapter XIV.

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.—1797–1804.

SCHOOL AT READING.—REV. JOHN NEWTON.—ENTRANCE INTO HOXTON ACADEMY.—EXTRACTS FROM DIARY.—MINISTRY AT SOUTHAMPTON.—OFFER OF PREFERMENT IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.—REFUSAL TO CONFORM.—ESCAPE FROM DROWNING.—VISIT TO WALWORTH.—RESIGNATION AT SOUTHAMPTON.—INVITATION TO YORK STREET CHAPEL.—ACCEPTANCE OF THE PASTORATE.—ORDINATION SERVICES.

After Mr. Clayton's second son, George, had left Wallingford, in company with his brother, it was observed that the youth had outgrown his strength, and that he gave indications of a delicacy of constitution which awakened some anxiety in the hearts of his anxious parents. It therefore became a matter of serious consideration, how best to combine the care of his health with a due attention to study. With the view of promoting both objects, he was, in the year 1797, placed under the roof of the Rev. Archibald Douglas and his excellent wife, at Reading. There he found his second home; and there every attention was paid to his physical welfare, and every effort made to secure his moral and religious improvement. At the same time he became a private pupil of the Rev. Dr. Valpy, of that town, for many years distinguished as the head of an academy, generally regarded as little inferior to the schools of Harrow and Rugby.

George Clayton attended daily in one of the class-rooms, under the immediate instruction of the Rev. Edward Valpy, an eminent classic; and read with him, Ovid, Virgil, Livy, Horace, Homer, and Xenophon.

Here also he received instruction, from an emigrant priest, in the French language.

When between fourteen and fifteen years of age, he was favoured with the notice and friendship of many of the most respectable inhabitants of Reading. Mrs. Ryder, a lady related to the Harrowby family, became almost his patron; and he often met at the house of Dr. and Mrs. Ring, the late venerable Dr. Marsh, Lady Marsh, his mother, and others of honoured memory. It was the custom of Dr. and Mrs. Ring to receive and entertain at their house, pious clergymen, of the evangelical school. They were themselves brought to the knowledge of the truth, under the heart-stirring ministry of the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan, and were solicitous to perpetuate his faithful testimony, now no longer heard in the parish church of St. Giles. They therefore invited a succession of clergymen, during the months of summer, who lectured, and expounded the Scriptures in their drawing-room; while the adjoining apartments were thrown open to all those who were disposed to attend.

Among the honoured servants of Christ who visited them was the Rev. John Newton, who has before been mentioned, in these pages, as the friend of the father of the family. His talent for expository ministrations was universally admitted, and was perhaps unrivalled. Here his doctrine distilled like the dew; and his hearers could not but be sensible that "grace was poured into his lips," and that "his word was with power." George Clayton was frequently present on these occasions; and in this way *his* friendship with the venerable preacher commenced.

It was at a very early period of his life that he decided to enter the ministry. Indeed his thoughts never appear to have been turned in any other direction, when the subject of his future course in life was under the consideration of himself or his parents; and for the work he contemplated he made diligent preparations, mentally and spiritually.

On recovering from an alarming illness, which seized him when sixteen years of age, he resolved to keep a diary, which he forthwith commenced, and kept up to the end of his long life. In this he describes, with great minuteness, the several moods of mind through which he passed; and records the various resolutions he made, in the prospect of the solemn and momentous duties on which he was about to enter. There is, in these early volumes, the evidence of a depth of piety and experience, remarkable for one so young. They reveal the fact that the divine Spirit was, unconsciously to the youth himself, gradually qualifying him for future usefulness, as one who would have to deal with the souls of men in all the varying phases of thought and emotion with which humanity is conversant; and who therefore had to pass through a severe mental conflict, and be himself the subject of a moral discipline, somewhat sharp, but eminently salutary and instructive to a teacher of others.

He began to preach very early; as in 1799 he records some instances of his juvenile efforts to make known the Gospel. This was before he had completed his seventeenth year. He was now a student at Hoxton College, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Simpson, for whom he appears to have entertained a profound veneration; and between whom and himself there soon existed a reciprocal warmth of affection, peculiar to the tutor and the student, that continued unchanged down to the death of that excellent man, whose funeral sermon was preached, in the Academy chapel, by his favourite pupil.

Two extracts, from the diary alluded to, will suffice to show the estimate he had formed of himself, and the jealous scrutiny with which he probed his heart, in order to ascertain its real condition. Brought up, under the careful tuition, and wise and tender restraints, of a religious home, there was all the greater necessity for a rigorous self-examination of his own soul, lest he should be found mistaking the shadow for the substance; and interpreting the effect of habit, and an almost unconscious imitation of the good examples, with which he had been familiar from childhood, as if they were the natural outgrowths of a new life, implanted within him by the divine Spirit.

"*January 20th*, 1800.

"The history of one day with me is the history of twenty. It is full of sin; for even when I hope most, I feel compunction of soul. I would always fear hardness of heart; and would deprecate grieving the Holy Spirit, as a principal prognostic of that awful condition. Yet I am fully sensible that frequently, by my ungodly conduct, I am guilty of doing despite unto the Spirit of grace; and particularly by resisting those internal operations, which one always attributes to His divine agency. I am very formal in duties, and remiss in their performance; and am not adequately affected by the sufferings of my Saviour, even when treating of them to others. Lord, quicken and rouse me, that I may, with more delight, run in thy ways, and persevere unto the end. Amen."

"*September*, 1800.

"My feelings and disposition are very various; undulating like the sea, ebbing and flowing like the tide. However, to the praise of sovereign and undeserved mercy would I ascribe it, that I am still pursuing; and that I have enjoyed this week, I trust, much of communion with God. My retirements have been more regular; my thoughts and behaviour more consistent;

nor is this of myself, it is the gift of God. Nor do I write it in a way of boasting or glory, but only that, if ever I should relapse into indifference (which God forbid!), I may have this to bear record against me, and to help forward my penitence and promote my return. Amen."

It was after a somewhat brief residence at Hoxton—partly accounted for by the fact that he had been engaged in study all his life, and had entered the academy, with an amount of scholastic knowledge almost equal to that of many when they left it,—that Mr. George Clayton, not yet nineteen years of age, was sent to Southampton, as a probationer for the office of assistant minister to the Rev. Mr. Kingsbury, who then presided over one of the oldest Independent churches in the kingdom—the original members having formed themselves into a separate community in the year 1660.

On the eve of leaving Hoxton to go thither, he thus records his emotions, in the contemplation of his removal from the quiet scenes of student life, to the more public arena of action. The entry is at the close of the year 1801, when he finished his academic course.

"*December*, 1801.

"The occurrences of my existence daily grow more interesting; as I am called upon to occupy a more prominent position on the stage of life. Various and conflicting have been the emotions of my mind. It has been indeed a troubled ocean, and has, alas! too often cast up mire and dirt. I have the prospect of entering more statedly on the discharge of the duties of the ministerial office. Oh! who is sufficient for these things? Lord Jesus, make perfect thy strength in my weakness: perfect thou that which concerneth me. Oh, may the Spirit of glory and of God rest abundantly upon me! Go with me to the place to which I am sent: there speak to the hearts and consciences of people through me. Guard me from imprudences; keep me back from presumptuous sins; and cleanse me from secret faults. Oh God, my whole heart is open to thine inspection. I submit myself entirely to thee. Be thou my light, my hope, my guide, my ever-satisfying portion; and at length my exceeding great reward.

"Oh, how many mercies have I to be thankful for;—mercies innumerable, both temporal and spiritual! I commend to thee, blessed Redeemer, in faith and prayer, my dear brother William, who is about to succeed me in this place, as a student. May the good Lord preserve him from evil, promote his improvement, and make him a burning and a shining light! Amen."

Young as he was, Mr. George Clayton had preached with great acceptance, in some of the largest and most influential congregations, in and near London. His first sermon in his father's chapel, which was filled with the *élite* of dissent, was delivered before he was eighteen years old;—a rather formidable task for so young an orator, but one in which he acquitted himself most successfully.

So far as external advantages and accomplishments went, he had all the elements of a popular speaker; possessing a handsome person, an admirably clear and distinct elocution, and manners most graceful and winning; while the unmistakable enunciation of the great doctrines of Gospel truth, proclaimed with all boldness and fidelity to the souls of his hearers, insured him the suffrages and sympathies of all the good; and proved, in the case of many, most attractive, and, ultimately, most effective to the undecided and ungodly.

An object of admiration to not a few, there was great danger of the young preacher being led away by the applause that followed him. His diary shows that he was quite aware of the fact, but knew also where and how to guard against it.

"Last Sabbath," he writes, under date November, 1801, "I preached at H——; was greatly assisted, and much caressed; the good Lord gave me acceptance. O may the foot of pride never be suffered to come against me. How little do I deserve the reputation I enjoy! Could my fellow-creatures see my heart, I should become an outcast from the pious and holy. And if God were to suffer me to act out the latent depravity of my heart!—Oh, I tremble to think of it! Hold thou me up, O Lord, and then I shall be safe. Many watch for my halting. Numerous are my observers. Lord, dry up sin in me, in its root and principle. Kill more and more the man of sin. Let Christ be formed in me, the hope of glory. Let me live in the Spirit; and walk in the Spirit; and exemplify the fruits of the Spirit; and ever maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. May the Holy Ghost fill me with all necessary gifts and grace, crown me with usefulness, and conduct me to glory. Amen."

After preaching, with great acceptance, for two months, the church at Southampton were very desirous that young Mr. Clayton should settle among them. His father, whom he naturally consulted on so important a matter, objected to what he thought a precipitancy in the movement; but when he found it was the office of an assistant minister to which he was invited, and not to the co-pastorate, which would have involved much more binding obligations, and a larger amount of serious responsibility, he advised his acceptance of the invitation. "I am much pleased," writes his father, "that the manner of conducting this affair has been so satisfactory to Mr. Kingsbury. He seems to have attained that which few have exemplified: he rose with humility; he has shone with a steady and useful lustre; and he sets with a dignity unstained by envy. To wondrous few is this grace given."

On the second Sabbath in March, Mr. George

Clayton commenced his stated ministry at Southampton, preaching from the words, 2 Cor. xi. 15: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;" and 2 Cor. vii. 2: "Receive us."

Here he laboured most diligently; "studying to show himself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He was sensitively anxious to discharge his ministerial duties most conscientiously, both in and out of the pulpit; never presuming to offer to the people that which cost him nothing; and not venturing to depend upon his natural fluency of speech, to the neglect of due preparatory reflection, on the topics on which he had to discourse. The effect of such earnest and painstaking labours soon began to reveal itself, in his growing acceptability as a preacher. Persons, who had never before been within the walls of a dissenting chapel, were soon found among his regular hearers; and not a few, who there first learned the nature and virulence of that spiritual disease which was consuming their souls, found that, along with the ministrations of the word, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them."

Warm and lasting attachments were formed with the people here, who seemed to vie with one another in showing kindness to the youthful minister, and almost painfully oppressed him with their attentions. His diary bears witness to his consciousness of the danger attending all this; but the inward warrings of soul, of which he was the subject, served to keep him humble.

The relationship existing between Mr. George Clayton and Mr. Kingsbury, the senior minister, was most advantageous to both parties. His brother John at Newbury, and he at Southampton, were happily initiated, by degrees, into all the anxieties and responsibilities of pastoral life. Those young ministers who have enjoyed similar advantages, under the guidance of a wise and thoughtful, and kindhearted elder pastor, can testify to the invaluable benefits which result from such an arrangement. The character and example and teachings of a Paul, who has stood for many years before the church and the world,—having gathered in rich experiences, often at no small cost, which he is willing to communicate to the Timothy, whom the Great Master has associated with him,—are of infinite service to the latter. Labour is divided; which, if the congregation be large, is too much for one, who is but a neophyte in the work; and that crushing sense of responsibility,—which at times rests heavily on the heart of the pastor, and is most painful and harassing, —is unfelt, or, at least, is not felt so oppressively, if shared with another.

For two years this union with Mr. Kingsbury and the church at Southampton continued, with mutually growing esteem. The youthful preacher gradually won his way to all hearts; and in his simple, faithful ministrations, was greatly owned by his divine Master. But still he ever regarded his position here as tentative; and could never bring his mind to the conviction that this was to be the scene of his permanent labours.

Shortly after taking up his abode at this place, an earnest request was made to him to undertake the instruction of a youth, the son of one of the members of the congregation; and this became a subject of no small amount of anxious thought. He believed his own mental powers would be stimulated afresh, by having to communicate scholastic knowledge to another; while he was desirous not to engage in anything that would interfere, in any degree, with his direct preparation for the pulpit. He naturally sought counsel of his father, from whom he received the following reply:—

"The proposal of your becoming a tutor to the young gentleman, I have thought of, not a little. I can never advise to anything that would diminish your force in the great work of preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. A situation that would stimulate you to literary pursuits, not only to keep, but advance the secular learning you have acquired, I should like much. Living in the house of your pupil's father must be on conditions which perhaps cannot be granted. You must not come down from the high ground of the minister of Christ. The sacrifices on the domestic altar must be duly offered, and many nameless concessions made to the decorum of your office.

"Imperious necessity does not require your seeking bread in this way, which opens a prospect to emolument and usefulness. You are already handsomely provided for. If you enter the door which invites you, it must be out of a pure regard to the glory of God, and doing good to those minds which God may have disposed favourably to you, to bring to light His purposes of grace towards them, by your instrumentality."

The project, however, was ultimately abandoned, as, on the whole, undesirable.

But another offer, of a very different kind, was about this time set before him, which, as illustrative both of his own and his brother's conscientious Nonconformity, is deserving of record. The whole of the account of the transaction about to be referred to is given, nearly verbatim, from Mr. George Clayton's own manuscript. I am not sure that the name of the person who manifested such a lively interest in the two young ministers is known; but of the fact there is not the slightest doubt.

It was not long after the settlement of Mr. Clayton's eldest son, that a lady of fortune and position in society, whose town residence was at Kensington, sent a message to Mr. Clayton, sen., desiring an interview with him, at her house, on an early day. He consequently waited on her, and was informed that a presentation to a family living had fallen to her disposal; and that if either of his elder sons would accept it, she would look no further, but feel happy in presenting one of them to the benefice, estimated at £600 or £700 per annum. He thanked the lady for her unexpected generosity, and kind intentions towards his sons; adding that they were of an age to form their own opinions on the subject; that he would place her offer before them; and, with as little delay as possible, make known to her the decision, to which their own unbiassed judgment might finally conduct them.

The result of the interview was soon communicated to the young men, who gave to the lady's proposal a grave and calm consideration. They studied the Thirty-nine Articles, and Book of Common Prayer, to which subscription, and an *ex animo* assent, would, of course, be indispensable. They read anew some works which they had previously perused, on both sides of the question of Conformity; including Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and Towgood's *Letters on Dissent;* and, in consequence, were fully convinced that the obstacles to the acceptance of the proffered boon were, as far as they were concerned, insurmountable.

Mr. Clayton used no influence, direct or indirect, to sway their final determination. All that was said on the subject by their mother, to whose judgment a deserved deference was paid, was in these few words: "You have certainly a very tempting proposal brought before you: think it over; ask counsel of God, in prayer; search the New Testament Scriptures, to ascertain the mind of Christ; and remember to listen readily to the whispers of conscience; lest perchance, at a future period of your lives, you should be forced to hear its thunders."

To the eldest son, in addition to other scruples, it was a serious objection that he had but recently received ordination; and considered himself to be as fully authorized to preach the Gospel, and administer the sacraments of the Christian church, as his own inward satisfaction demanded, and his prospective usefulness required. To re-ordination, as involving an acknowledgment of the invalidity of the service by which he had already been set apart, he felt an invincible repugnance. He probably thought and acted in sympathy with John Howe, who, when kindly and urgently pressed to conform, by his friend and old acquaintance, the then Bishop of Exeter, told his lordship that he was utterly unable to do it. He stated that he could not, without greatly trespassing on his patience, go through the several objections he had to make, against the terms of conformity, but that they were insurmountable. The bishop pressed him to name any *one* he reckoned to be of weight. He thereupon instanced the point of re-ordination.

"Why, pray, sir," said the bishop, "what hurt is there in being twice ordained?"

"Hurt, my lord?" said Howe; "the thought is shocking; it hurts my understanding; it is an absurdity,—for nothing can have two beginnings. I am sure," continued he, "I am already a minister of Christ; and I am prepared to debate that matter with your lordship, if you please; but I can't begin again to be a minister."

In viewing the whole question calmly, carefully, and with prayer, for divine direction, Mr. John Clayton respectfully, yet gratefully, declined the benefice.

The circumstances of Mr. Clayton's second son were somewhat different from those of his brother. As yet he had not received ordination, being then only in the twentieth year of his age. He felt that such a provision for life as had been submitted to his acceptance, was not, on slight grounds, to be refused. He was further strengthened in this feeling by the fact that he had, at that juncture of time, formed an attachment to a lady, which was reciprocated; but she was restrained from fully committing herself by the opposition shown on the part of the parents, more especially the father, a bigoted Churchman, and distinguished, as to his opinions on all subjects, by inflexible determination. He avowed that he had no objection whatever to the proposed connexion, save one, and that was insuperable. The young suitor of his only child was a Nonconformist, and until he should renounce his nonconformity, his own consent should never be given.

Placed in a predicament so peculiar, it is not a matter of surprise that the young man had to sustain a great inward struggle; sometimes casting a wistful eye upon a gentlemanly provision, at other times calculating upon an auspicious domestic settlement; yet fully satisfied that the paramount question was simply this, "What is right before God, at whose bar I must shortly appear, to give an account of motives, as well as actions?"

He read much, on both sides of the ecclesiastical controversy between Churchmen and Dissenters. Besides those books his brother had perused, he went carefully through Neale's *History of the Puritans*, as far as the time allowed for deliberation would permit. He consulted also with some dear and venerated clergymen, who gave him the results of their own reasoning and experience, and one of whom had written a defence of national religious establishments. He looked anxiously and attentively into the liturgical offices of the English Church, and pondered gravely the Thirty-nine Articles. He then requested a conversation with his parents, and frankly confessed to them how strenuously all his natural feelings and interests pleaded in favour of conformity to the Episcopal Church, yet that on a question so momentous, he dared not "confer with flesh and blood;" and therefore, after great searchings of heart, had determined to follow his elder brother's example, and to decline the benefice, which had been offered with so much of spontaneous and disinterested kindness.

While thus apprising the lady of the specific grounds of his refusal, he expressed his profound regret that he was compelled to differ from so many of the learned, the wise, and the pious, who arrived at conclusions opposed to those he had been led to entertain; and which, with his deep and ineradicable convictions, he had no alternative but to accept. Thus ended this anxious inquiry; and with it, all hope of preferment in any ecclesiastical establishment.

More than once during his sojourn at Southampton, the parents and brothers of Mr. George Clayton visited him; and he records, in his diary, an escape from drowning, which both he and his brother William had, while bathing. This, with a severe illness, at the close of the second year of his ministry, and which laid him aside for nearly a month, was blessed to the production of a greater tenderness of conscience, and a deeper solemnity of soul, of which his people reaped the advantage in the increasing spirituality of his preaching.

In December, 1803, he left Southampton for a visit to his family, in London. On Christmas day he preached at Camden chapel, Camberwell; and on the second Sunday in the new year at what was then known as Lock's Fields meeting, and afterwards as York Street chapel, Walworth, where he had been asked to officiate some months before. These were his first services in that part of London, which was subsequently to be the scene of the faithful ministrations of more than fifty years. In his diary he writes, under date of January, 1804:—

> "I preached at Walworth. The congregation was good in the morning, and large in the afternoon. I trust I only wished to know the will of God, and do it. My motives I laid before God, and said, 'Let the Lord do with me what seemeth good in His sight.' In the evening preached at Camden chapel—a special sermon. To this service I had looked forward with much fear and sorrow; but God was better to me than my most sanguine expectations. O heavenly Father, bless the labours of that day! May I hear of some good being done; if it be the will of Heaven! Let some soul be brought to glory, to honour, to eternal life!"

The special sermon above referred to was addressed to the volunteers, who, at that period, when much alarm was felt at the threatened invasion of Buonaparte, banded themselves together in great numbers, for the defence of their altars and their homes. The discourse, which had been previously delivered at Southampton, was founded on Matthew xxii. 21: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." This he was earnestly requested to publish; and after a little hesitation consented.

This was the first production of Mr. George Clayton that issued from the press, and his reasons for printing it are stated briefly by him. At this time the adversaries of Dissenters,—seeing that the latter stood in a position similar to that occupied by the apostles, who felt it to "be right to obey God rather than man," in matters religious,—charged them with disloyalty to the reigning sovereign, in matters political. The preacher desired to repel this false accusation; one but rarely, if ever, brought against Nonconformists now, even by the most rabid of their opponents. In his preface Mr. Clayton says:—

> "If it should be asked, 'Why do you venture to appear before the public?' the author's answer is short, and he wishes it may be deemed satisfactory. He is not ambitious of becoming a candidate for earthly fame; his talents do not qualify him for the enterprise; and his principles forbid the attempt. Nor is he induced to place himself before the eye of the world merely by the solicitations of partial friends, whom it is always pleasing to gratify, but whose commendatory persuasions hardly form a sufficient apology in case of rashness and inadvertency. Actuated by a sincere hope, that those truths which appeared interesting and edifying to such as heard them delivered from the pulpit, might, by assuming their present form, become more permanently and extensively useful, he submits them to the candour of the public, and the blessing of God. He is also not without expectation, that some impressions unfavourable to that class of the community to which his conscience attaches him, fastened on the public mind by the uncharitable insinuations of bigotry, may be effaced; and others, of a contrary nature, substituted and cherished."

The congregation at the place of worship where Mr. G. Clayton preached this sermon, seemed desirous to secure his services, as their minister, and the subjoined letter from his father to him refers to this subject:—

"Yesterday, Mr. Carter, deputed by the trustees of Camden chapel, waited on me, to make inquiries concerning the nature of your engagements at Southampton, and whether an invitation to be the stated minister at Camberwell would be accepted.

"I answered, that your obligations at Southampton were far from being indissoluble; but that your steady regard to principle, and to a consistency of profession, would not allow your becoming the minister of Camden chapel, with their present plan of worship and discipline; that you would not approach the Church of England any nearer, except you became a regular clergyman; and that as you were at present a Dissenter, you would not diminish the uniformity of the church of God, by countenancing a middle plan of worship, especially in a permanent relation to the unincorporated worshippers. I promised to mention his visit to me, and the purport of our conversation, when I wrote. Moreover I told him I was persuaded that they never would get a minister of education, talent, and dignity of character, who would settle with them on their present middle plan.

"Your parents, brothers, and sisters also, are unanimous in voting against your departure from the regular liberal dissent, in which your father and his sons have, thus far, been honoured by reputation in the church and the world; yea, usefulness in both."

Most probably, Mr. Clayton's decided statements, with regard to the hybrid ecclesiastical character of Camden chapel, in which, at that period, there was an attempt to combine the different modes of worship, as observed by Episcopalians and Dissenters—an arrangement which has rarely worked well,—led to the abandonment of the design of inviting his son. The place was, afterwards, affiliated with the Established Church; and was for several years the scene of the faithful and eloquent ministrations of the Rev. Henry Melville, for a long time the most popular clergyman in the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

The invitation that had been given by the officers of the Walworth church, which was then destitute of a pastor, was designedly, on their part, for the purpose of affording an opportunity for the people to hear Mr. Clayton, and for him to form an acquaintance with the state of things existing among them. A series of painful trials had befallen the congregation. The first two ministers who had been called to preside over them had died amongst them—both at the early age of thirty-four,—and were buried, side by side, in the graveyard adjoining the chapel. Their *united* pastorates did not exceed four years. From the death of the first of these excellent men—at whose ordination Mr. Clayton, sen., preached to the people,—to the settlement of his successor, three years and a half elapsed. When the latter also passed away from the service of earth to the higher engagements of the heavenly temple, three more years of pastoral destitution were appointed to the church, whose position was one that was trying in the extreme. But the days of their mourning were soon to be ended. Weeping had endured for a long and dark and dreary night, but joy was at hand, to be ushered in with the advent of a bright and blessed day, that was, by Mr. Clayton's coming amongst them, to rise on the bereaved flock.

His ministrations appear to have been very acceptable, for in his diary he writes thus:—

"Friday, the 13th of January, 1804, is a day which will ever be memorable in my history, either for the darkness or brilliancy of its consequences. On that day the deacons of the Walworth meeting waited on me. We began our conversation with solemn prayer to God. After some deliberation, fully believing myself to be in the path of plain and unequivocal duty, I consented, in three months' time, to visit Walworth with a view to the pastoral office. Lord, sanction with thine approbation, and the seal of thy Spirit, what was begun and ended with fervent prayer!"

Immediately after this, he returned to Southampton; and at once communicated to Mr. Kingsbury, and through him to the people, his intention of terminating his assistant-ministership with them. In his diary, dated the 14th of January, the day on which he made these intimations, he writes:—

"I do not feel my mind more inclined to remain here than it was. My understanding, my will, my affections, my conscience, lean most decidedly to Walworth. Yet, oh, Lord! I fly to thee; thou hast promised thy heavenly guidance. I ask it, through Christ my Lord. Lead me by thy Spirit, O adorable Jehovah, and keep me under the shadow of thy wings. Hide me in thy pavilion from the strife of tongues; make my path plain; and bless, I pray thee, the kind, affectionate, prayerful people in this place. Lead them to act to thy glory. May they see thy will, and be enabled to acquiesce therein. Hear their prayers for my continuance, if it be for our mutual good. Thou who didst appear to Moses in the bush of fire; to Elijah in the desert cave; to thy holy apostles on the day of Pentecost, appear to me. Direct me; bless me, also, O my Father! Amen and Amen."

This announcement of his intention to resign was a source of great regret to the Southampton people; and the whole church and congregation were summoned together to consider his letter. At this meeting a unanimous invitation to the co-pastorate was given him, with earnest wishes for his continuance in the place. "I received this," he says, "with much anxiety; grateful to God, and grateful to the people." This communication is so honourable to all parties that it is given entire.

"At a meeting of the church and congregation under the pastoral care of the Rev. W. Kingsbury, held in the vestry, this day, January 16th, 1804, it was unanimously resolved, that the following letter should be addressed to the Rev. G. Clayton, in reply to his letter communicated to us by the Rev. W. Kingsbury:—

"Rev. Sir, and our dearly-beloved Minister,—We have this day met to hear read to us, with much distress of mind, by our beloved pastor, the contents of your letter addressed to us, dated the 14th inst., and which we can truly say, one and all, has much wounded our hearts.

"We should think ourselves ungrateful to you, deficient in our duty to ourselves, and unthankful to God, for sending you amongst us, were we not to communicate to you our feelings on the present occasion; and to express to you our united sentiments, on this truly distressing circumstance. We do it with some degree of hope; as we trust that both you and ourselves wish to be directed by the Holy Spirit of God, whose guidance we humbly implore, on this very momentous occasion.

"We beg leave, in the first place, with perfect unanimity, to express our warmest affection for you; and that, as we ever have done, so we ever shall (should Providence continue you amongst us), make it our study to render you happy, and to administer to your comfort, under every circumstance of God's providence. We believe you were at first brought to Southampton by the hand of God. We are the more confirmed in this opinion by what our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, and our hands have done, since you have been with us. It has pleased God to make you peculiarly acceptable to us, and to our town in general. Previous to your coming to Southampton, we had an intention of enlarging our place of worship; but we believe the project would have failed of execution, had you not been the means of uniting our minds, and enlarging our hearts, to complete this sacred fabric.

"Under God, sir, you have been the instrument of drawing many families and individuals regularly to attend divine ordinances. We believe many hundreds also occasionally hear the Gospel, who, before you came amongst us, seldom, if ever, heard the word of truth. We believe you have essentially benefited the young in influencing many to be sober-minded;

and we have no hesitation in declaring it to be our hope, that in many a heart the seeds are sown which will produce fruit unto life eternal. Some, we believe, ascribe to you the honour of being the instrument, in disposing their hearts to serve the Lord fully.

"We believe you, sir, to be acceptable to old and young, rich and poor, the serious and those that are still in the world: that the gifts with which it has pleased God to bless you are adapted to the situation where His providence has placed you: that your ministry has been crowned with success beyond our most sanguine expectations. It does not appear to us, that a field of more extensive usefulness than that where it has pleased God to place you, can offer itself, in the whole world. We therefore, the church and congregation now assembled, unanimously, cordially, and affectionately, invite your continuance with us, as our minister. We, the pastor, deacons, and members, invite you to accept the co-pastoral charge; and we all unitedly trust and pray that the good Spirit of the Lord will lead you to that decision which shall ultimately promote His glory, and the peace, happiness, and prosperity of the church of our adorable Lord Jesus, in this place.

"We cannot close our letter without expressing the high degree of pleasure we have received in beholding the most cordial affection which has always subsisted between yourself and our revered pastor; a pleasing omen of future peace and prosperity. Signed,—

"W. Kingsbury, *Pastor*,
"Peter Bernard, *Deacon*,
"James W. Lobb, *Deacon*,
} In behalf of the church and congregation.

"Wm. Bernard,
"Joseph L. Darvall,
"Edwd. Toomer,
"Thos. Bernard,
"Saml. S. Taylor,
"Richd. Taylor,
} Trustees in behalf of the congregation."

To this earnest and affectionate communication he gave, as it deserved, a prayerful and anxious attention. It was, of course, most cheering to his heart to find how firmly and closely he had entwined himself around the affections of the people; and to know that his desires and efforts for their spiritual advancement had been appreciated, and were not destitute of beneficial results.

There were many things that made it desirable he should remain at Southampton. The cordiality of the senior minister; the division of labour and responsibility in the pastorate; the warm attachment of the people; and the fact, which was daily becoming more and more evident, that, in the two years spent in the town, he had gained a public position of great importance and influence—which, in a new sphere, would have to be secured by breaking ground afresh,—all these things pointed to his continuance in the scene of his present labours, as having much to recommend it.

But other considerations pressed with equal and even greater weight upon his judgment; and led to the adoption of another course. On the 26th of January, he communicated to Mr. Kingsbury, and the friends under his charge, his final decision, relative to the co-pastorship—which was to decline it; and from this time his mind was at rest. The people, however, were very reluctant to part with him. Many private and personal efforts were made to endeavour to alter his determination, and under date February 27th he says:—

"The people here are not enabled to give me up. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I have no wish but to honour thee, and to promote thy glory. Oh! discover my motives to myself. Thou readest the heart; but to me it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Search me, O Lord, and try me, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! O, for ten thousand worlds, I would not err, in a matter of so much moment. If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence. Cleanse my heart, O Lord; remove all iniquity from me, and do with me as seemeth thee good. Truly can I say (unless my mind egregiously deceives me), that as to one single affair of life, I have not a will of my own. To Jesus Christ I desire to live; to His disposal I resign myself, and make His will mine. Oh! thou lowly, meek, yet all-discerning Jesus, I now apply to thee in solemn prayer. The heathen had their oracles: thou art the true and infallible Teacher, and Guide of thy church. By thy Holy Spirit thou dost give counsel to thy people. Oh! counsel me, by that wisdom which cannot err. Guide me by thine eye. Remove every inclination of my bosom which thou disapprovest, and strengthen and uphold, in undaunted exercise, all that thou hast implanted. Oh! Spirit of all divine power and grace, dwell richly in my heart; console, fortify, direct, and purge my soul. Oh! blessed and glorious Trinity, three divine persons, mysteriously subsisting in one God, co-equal, co-eternal, everlasting; God in covenant, whom I serve in my spirit, and to whom I have devoted myself in body and in soul, appear for me, who am but dust and ashes, the weakest and unworthiest of thy creatures; who am less than the least. Pitifully regard me; save and deliver; and at this time take me to thyself rather than suffer me to err in my demeanour and my decisions. Help, help, oh! holy Lord, Father of mercies, God of grace. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art the Lord my God. Lead me in a plain path, because of my observers. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe!"

These extracts show his supreme anxiety to know the will of God, that he might not follow the inclinations of his own heart, but the unmistakable directions of his divine Master.

One more effort was made by the good people at Southampton. Their deacon, Mr. Jobb, was commissioned to offer the young minister double the salary he had been receiving, and a house to reside in; but he remained firm to his prayerfully-formed resolution; and records, with thankfulness, under the date of March 1st, the fact, that at a meeting of the people it was finally determined not to press the invitation any further. "And when he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.'"

The removal to London was urged upon him by friends to whose judgment he could not but pay great deference. Dr. Simpson, his tutor; his father, and his brother John,—now happily settled at Kensington,—gave it as their unhesitating opinion that he should go thither; and his own mind was strongly, and, as he says, in his diary, unaccountably impressed with the belief that God had called him to labour there. Subsequent events proved that he had not been following an illusion of his own brain; but that an invisible hand was drawing him onwards to the great metropolis, as certainly as Paul was summoned, by the providence of God, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, on European soil. So he prepared to follow the pillar of cloud, that had been taken up from over the door of the tabernacle; and to pitch his tent in another part of the wilderness. His prayer was that of the leader of Israel, in which he desired not to depart, except with the sanction and under the guidance of God.

It was a painful task to leave the circle of friends with whom, for more than two years, he had enjoyed social and religious intercourse, which had been mutually pleasant and profitable; but the resolve having been made, the separation took place, amid mingled expressions of heartfelt sorrow, and mutual loving commendation to God. On Sunday, March 25th, he preached his farewell sermons to crowded audiences in Southampton; and on the following Wednesday returned to London. In the contemplation of his residence in the great city, he indulges in some sensible remarks, in a letter to his father:—

"May He who fixes the bounds of our habitations realize all that appearances unquestionably promise! I shall certainly feel *less* when I come to London; and be obliged to entertain more diminutive ideas of my own importance. This I shall esteem a real benefit; though some may esteem it an injury. I shall no longer be tempted to be self-complacent, as '*par inter pares;*' but shall know my own inferiority, which I hope will nourish humility, and operate as a stimulus to diligence in reading, meditation, and prayer."

On Sabbath day, April 1st, 1804, he preached what may now be regarded as his first *pastoral* sermon, at Walworth; for although he was at the time but a probationer for the pulpit, and had not received any formal call from the people, to take the spiritual oversight of them, yet that was the commencement of ministerial labours that were to be carried on, without interruption, in one place, for the long period of half a century. He had not completed his twentieth year, when he thus entered upon the cares and anxieties of a London pastor's life; and in after days, he looked back with wonder at his temerity, in undertaking a task so onerous, with the limited experience of a man only just out of his teens. But he realized to the fullest extent the truth of the promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

He records in his diary, with gladness and gratitude, the hallowed emotions with which he went through the services of this Sabbath, and the pleasure he enjoyed in the society of Captain Wilson, whose guest he was, for the day. Of the romantic history of this excellent man, who commanded the ship "Duff,"—the first vessel sent out by the London Missionary Society,—and who was one of the deacons of the chapel at York Street, a short account will be given in the next chapter.

On the 29th of April, Mr. G. Clayton was admitted to the fellowship of the church, at Walworth, by the Rev. J. (afterwards Dr.) Pye Smith, of Homerton. This was the initiatory transaction adopted by the people, before they made a formal choice of their newly-elected brother—one of their own number—as their teacher and pastor; a mode of action in those days not confined to the church at York Street, although now it has fallen into disuse.

On May 13th, he preached an admirable sermon, which was afterwards published, on behalf of the Protestant Union; a valuable society, "established in 1798, for the purpose of enabling ministers to make provision for their widows and children, by means of annual premiums among themselves, and of donations, annual contributions, and bequests." Although still a young minister and a young man, he had imbibed the true *esprit du corps*, as the following paragraph, with which the sermon closes, shows:—

> "This fund, if established on liberal and enlarged principles, would remove some very serious obstacles to the formation of those ties which are 'honourable to all.' By this means, you will enable your ministers to discharge the duties of domestic life with greater ease and quietude of mind; raise them above the little prying narrowness of home economy, which some are disposed to ridicule; and consequently afford them an opportunity of paying a more devoted and undivided attention to the concerns of your families and their flock, and to give themselves more entirely to reading, meditation, and prayer.
>
> "In the ministerial character, the teasing thoughtfulness, occasioned by worldly anxiety and narrow circumstances, should be, as much as possible, avoided; and the mind set at rest with regard to futurity. The man, encircled by a numerous offspring, can enjoy but little, if the dark and distressing imagination perpetually haunts him, that, should he die, his defenceless

partner and infant race are to be plunged into complicated woes. You censure him for want of cheerfulness; for reserve; for timidity. How can it be otherwise, when his brow is incessantly furrowed with care; his tongue chained in silence, and sentinels placed at the door of his lips, lest the big sorrow of his heart should escape him; and his fortitude depressed, by fearing to incur the displeasure of those, at whose mercy his earthly all may one day or other be left?

"This charity paves the way for the calm and resigned dissolution of ministerial connexions. It smooths and softens his deathbed, and plucks from his last pillow the sharp thorn of care. The agonies of his departure are alleviated by the thought that, while he takes his flight to the world where they hunger and thirst no more, his weeping helpmate and his sobbing babes will not be obliged to experience, in this vale of tears, the miserable contrast to his enjoyments.

"The Protestant Union borrows the voice of divine mercy, and says, 'Leave thy fatherless children with me, and I will keep them alive:' it stands, as the favourite disciple, to receive the dying bequest of the servant of God: it opens the doors of an asylum, where the widow dries her tears, receives 'beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;' where the 'barrel of meal wastes not, nor does the cruse of oil fail;' and where the 'fatherless findeth mercy.' To the support of such an establishment, you will esteem it your honour and privilege to contribute. May you inherit 'the blessing of him who was ready to perish, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy!'"

The formal call of the church was given to Mr. G. Clayton on May 19th, 1804, and accepted by him the following week; and on Wednesday, June 6th, his ordination took place. His brother John began the service with prayer, and reading the Scriptures. The introductory discourse was delivered, and the usual questions put, by the Rev. Mr. Kingsbury, with whom the young minister about to be ordained had been associated at Southampton. Dr. Simpson, Mr. George

Clayton's beloved tutor at Hoxton, offered the designation prayer; and his father, who had to come from watching by the sick bed of his daughter Jane, who shortly after died, gave the charge from 1 Timothy vi. 20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." This, together with Mr. Kingsbury's discourse, was published. Dr. Nicol, of the Scotch Church, Swallow Street, London, preached to the people.

Thus happily the newly-elected pastor was settled in the midst of his flock; and gave himself heartily to the work of the ministry; resolved, as God should help him, to esteem "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord;" and not to count his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with honour and joy.

Chapter XV.

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.—1804-1821.

HIS MARRIAGE. — SILENT SABBATH. — EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY. — ENLARGEMENT OF CHAPEL. — VISIT TO IRELAND. — REOPENING OF CHAPEL.—HAPPY MOMENTS.—ILLNESS.—LEAVING HOME.—ATTACK OF APOPLEXY.—PREACHES IN AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH.—ROMANTIC HISTORY OF CAPTAIN WILSON, COMMANDER OF THE SHIP "DUFF."—HEART-SEARCHING.—SECOND APOPLECTIC ATTACK.—PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS.—MISSIONARY SERMON.—RESIDENCE AT GAINES, ESSEX.

In the autumn of 1804, Mr. George Clayton was married to Miss Mary Whennell, of Hornchurch, a lady of great accomplishments, and sterling piety. To her his ministry had been remarkably blessed; and frequent intercourse developed the existence of those feelings which led ultimately to marriage. But before this event took place, the course of the young people's love not only did not run smooth, but was impeded so pertinaciously, met with such terrible opposition, that the difficulties in the way of their union seemed insuperable. These principally arose from the nonconformity of the suitor for the lady's hand. But at length the chief obstacles were overcome; and Mr. George Clayton welcomed his bride to his new residence, at Charlotte Row, Walworth; and introduced to his people a pastor's wife, who was destined to exercise a most beneficial influence over her husband's flock, especially over the young people of her own sex.

Mr. Clayton was soon entirely occupied with the multiplying engagements of his ministerial life; and learned, ere long, how fearful is the demand which public duties make on those who, like himself, are called to occupy a prominent position in the church of God. He deeply lamented the interference with his hours for retirement, and converse with his own heart and God, to which these public engagements led. He complained of the unconscionably frequent, and lengthened calls of the people, in the midst of whom he had taken up his abode; and longed for a habitation where this would be in some degree impracticable.

He was intent on doing good; and for this purpose all his studies for the pulpit were pursued with conscientious fidelity. But he often found, as all his brethren have done, that the most careful mental preparation does not always secure a successful and happy presentation of what has been prepared; and had often to solace himself with the hope, which instances not a few tended to justify, that his own personal discomfort might be attended with a divine blessing to others.

In August, 1805, his daughter Mary was born; and the parents devoted themselves, with much prayer and anxiety, to the discharge of their new and interesting duties. With the opening of 1806, came a severe fit of illness, that, for a time, incapacitated him for his pulpit labours. But he was learning lessons in the sick chamber by which he was to be fitted for the more efficient discharge of public engagements. Thus he writes, Sabbath day, April 20th, 1806 :—

"A silent Sabbath! A Lord's day spent in confinement and solitude; and my first wish is that it may be a profitable one. My Jesus and His Spirit are not restrained to any places, or any times; may their united influence search and try me, cheer and enliven me, unfetter and enlarge me; shower down in copious measures grace and peace, and love and joy, that I may hold communion with my covenant God, my Father and my Friend! I have this day been wrestling with God, for my dear people. May they be edified, and sinners called this day to the knowledge and love of a crucified Redeemer! Oh, Spirit of truth! exert thine omnipotent energies, and snatch men as brands from the burning.

"I ought to be unfeignedly thankful that I have been laid aside so seldom from my delightful work. Blessed be God! it is long, very long, since this embargo was laid on me, and my lips sealed in silence. I take shame to myself, when I think of the many misspent, unprofitable, unserviceable, and unspiritual Sabbaths I have passed, when my tongue and my heart have been at sad and lamentable variance."

These records from his diary are valuable, as indicating the fact, that with a growing and extending popularity, which was sufficient to produce mental intoxication, he was the subject of spiritual conflicts that tended to keep him humble. Thus, in a meditation on the eve of the Sabbath, he writes:—

"And now, O my soul, like the patriarchs of old, thou art found *alone.* Having been thinking for others, it becomes thee now to think for thyself. Thou hast, as it were, closed the labours of preparation for the Sabbath, as far as relates to the exertions of the pulpit; now aim to attain a suitable frame of mind for the day of rest, and for the exercise of ministerial duties. And how is it with thee, O my soul? Hast thou made any progress in the divine life? Hast thou acquired more knowledge, more love, more experience, a more steady and uniform obedience? Alas! alas! I hardly dare answer in the affirmative.

"I have such cold, heartless, and unprofitable seasons in the closet, that I sometimes fear my religion is more external than inward and real. I trust that in the family, and in public ordinances, I have more enjoyment of God, and a greater perception of what I take to be the exercises and actings of grace; but even then, in those engagements, I may well exclaim, 'My leanness, my leanness!' How swiftly time revolves. Another year is hastening to its close; and how soon my frail life may end, God only can determine. Lord, I fly to thee afresh. Pardon me, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of thine appointment, and my thankful, admiring, and believing choice. Apply to my soul, by the power of the divine Spirit, the precious peace-speaking blood of Jesus. I trust I love Him, and desire to be spent in His service; but I pray not to be deceived in a matter of such moment, and to this end would daily begin anew my repentance, faith, and humble confidence."

Deeply conscious of the abounding goodness of God towards him, in the several relations he sustained, he grieved that his heart was not more affected by these divine dealings. Eagerly he embraced the opportunity afforded for communing with himself and his God; that he might pour out his acknowledgments to Him who had done great things for him. Thus, just after his 25th birthday, he meditates in the silence of his study:—

"Sweet are the hours of solitude to my spirit, worn with pulpit exertions, and other public duties. Scarcely ever do I know those seasons of impervious retirement which Isaac must have enjoyed, when he went out to meditate; and which Jacob knew when he was visited by God at Bethel; but I do love to be alone, and can truly say that—

'In secret silence of the mind,
My heaven, and there my God, I find.'

It is matter of continual wonder that, loving, as I do, this retreating from the creature and the world, I do it so seldom, so irregularly, and that I can ever allow my sacred hours to be exchanged or interrupted. This arises from the nearness of sensible objects, and their undue influence over my mind. How forcibly do they plead for entertainment and indulgence, and swallow up my time, and encroach on the seasons of worship! This I often consider as the worst symptom of my religious character, that I do not maintain a more intimate nearness, a closer walk with God.

"Why should friends, or sleep, or visiting, or anything, separate my soul from Jesus, or keep me from my God? His kindness to me in providence is very great. I surely have a prospered lot—in an affectionate and pious family, in a loving wife, a thriving child, obedient servants, a kind people, honour among my neighbours, respect in the world. Nay, what have I not? Ingratitude must blush to ask more. Lord, I should be happy, thrice happy, if I enjoyed more of thy blessed presence, tasted more thy heavenly love, and possessed a stronger likeness to the adorable Saviour. Temporal good I have received, in a manner quite wonderful, and am a living witness of the faithfulness of God to His promises. I entreat that I may not be hurt by the smiles of providence, but that every temporal good may prove as a ladder, by which I may ascend to heaven. I have lately entered into some plans and schemes as to secularities. Lord, let me not become earthly, nor permit even things lawful to draw me from thyself. I should dread to be among those who 'mind earthly things.'"

In the summer of 1808, a severe attack of illness rendered it necessary that Mr. Clayton should, for a season, abstain from labour; and change of air being deemed advisable, he visited Ramsgate. Previously to this, the increase of the congregation at York Street having rendered it necessary to enlarge the chapel, steps had been taken to carry this design into effect. During Mr. Clayton's illness the alterations were commenced; and the people had to disperse for several weeks, greatly to the regret of the pastor, on account of his forced absence.

His restoration to health having followed his removal to Ramsgate, and his chapel being still in the builder's hands, so that he could not return at once to his usual place of labour, his services were sought by the committee of the Hibernian Society, on whose behalf he visited Ireland. Some weeks were happily and usefully spent by him, in different public engagements. This journey tended still further to the invigoration of his before enfeebled powers; and afforded, by the novelty of the scenes he visited, the pleasant society with which he mingled, and the work in which he engaged, in the advocacy of the society's claims, much and varied enjoyment; so that he returned to Walworth, some short time before the chapel was ready for opening, with a good stock of replenished health, wherewith to enter upon his enlarged sphere of operations.

It was with peculiar and mingled emotions he appeared once more in the midst of his own people; whom, at the reopening services, he addressed from the words (Hag. ii. 9), "In this place will I give peace." His father preached in the afternoon; taking for his text the prayer of the Psalmist (Ps. cxviii. 25), "Send now prosperity."

Very soon every seat in the place, to which the minister and his flock had thus returned, was occupied; and many additions were made to the church, that now begun to assume proportions which it tasked his utmost strength to keep up with, so as to meet the legitimate claims that were made upon him, in his pastoral character.

On February 1st, 1809, it was his happiness to take part in the services held at Saffron-Walden, on the occasion of the settlement of his brother William; between whom and himself a most unusually warm fraternal attachment existed, which was cemented still further by spiritual sympathies, and a similarity of tastes and occupations.

From this time, nothing occurred to interrupt the usual course of labour in which Mr. George Clayton was engaged, for several years. His ministrations were increasingly successful, and the mutual attachment of pastor and people—bound together only by the bands which should unite those who sustain such holy and momentous relationships; there being on the part of the minister a hearty devotedness to the highest interests of his charge, and on theirs a loving gratitude in the recognition of such devotedness—this mutual attachment was daily becoming stronger; so that the church at Walworth presented, with the usual individual exceptions, a bright and cheering example to sister communities, of a united and happy Christian family. Such individual exceptions were, however, very trying to the sensitive mind of Mr. Clayton, who seems at times to have thought more of them than of the happier and more encouraging, and overwhelmingly numerous facts of an opposite character. But these served to temper the elation of heart which, otherwise, his almost uninterrupted ministerial success might have awakened.

No wonder that with so much to gladden and stimulate the pastor, he should be able to record in his diary, under date of March 3rd, 1811, an account of some "happy moments" he was permitted to enjoy. These, as his words evince, he estimated carefully; regarding them as compensatory visitations for past annoyances; or as designed to afford comfort, in the remembrance thereof, when other and far less pleasant emotions should be afterwards excited.

"'Ere I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.' If ever this sentiment was realized in my experience, it was this morning. In the exercises of family devotion a secret sweetness distilled upon my soul. I was softened, melted, and humbled at the throne of grace; filled with a sense of the evil of sin, and the love of Jesus Christ, whose agony and death were peculiarly impressed upon my mind. I saw Him fainting, groaning, dying, to become the life of perishing souls. I could scarcely finish the duty of prayer, and hastened from my knees into my study, where those sweet feelings were perpetuated; and I felt as though I could cheerfully have bid adieu to earthly scenes, and have taken wing for another world. Oh! that I knew more of these happy frames, and that by them my prayers might be accelerated, and my attainments in holiness promoted! Perhaps, the scene of delight is intended to prepare me for trials, or rather to support me under those which I already feel! There are, alas! sad causes of grief to me, ministerially. Oh! Lord, give me wisdom, patience, meekness, and dependence on thee. I am a child! Undertake for me!"

In the autumn of 1811, Mr. George Clayton was invited by his old flock, at Southampton, to take part in the ordination of the Rev. T. Adkins,—who still occupies his post among an attached flock at the Above Bar chapel; esteemed and beloved, as he righteously deserves to be, not only by the ministers and churches of his own denomination, but by all the people of God to whom he is known; and crowned with the honours of an unblemished reputation, and the evidences of extensive usefulness, which have accumulated through an official life of 56 years, spent in one place, and among one people.

Mr. Clayton preached on the occasion to a very crowded audience. "I received," he says in his note-book, "from the people at large, the most affecting expressions of gratitude and love." His choice of another sphere of permanent labour, while at the time it pained and troubled them, did not sever the cords of affection with which they had been for two years bound; while this renewal of the intercourse, before so pleasant, seven years afterwards, only deepened the respect and regard they entertained for each other.

In 1812 he was elected into the same fraternity into which his father and brother John had, some years before, been introduced—the Eclectic Society; at whose meetings, for the chief part of his ministerial life, he was accustomed to associate with clergymen and other ministers, in friendly fellowship.

Severe personal affliction again visited him; and the recollection that he was approaching the age at which his two predecessors at York Street had died, seemed to suggest to him that it would be the part of wisdom to decline some of the numerous extra-pastoral engagements to which he was invited, and to restrict his labours more to his own pulpit and people.

The number of those who, week after week, thronged his chapel, rendered such a resolve as this a necessity; for he found it very difficult to overtake the visiting which was required, especially among the sick. He made a list of the members of his congregation, and of their places of abode, and inserted the dates of his calls upon them; so that no one should be overlooked, and that there should not be an undue attention given to some to the neglect of others.

For six weeks, in the summer of 1812, he went to the north of England, and paid his first visit to the lakes. He appears to have gone with some sad forebodings, which, however, were happily unrealized. In the anticipation of an unfavourable issue of his present illness, just before his departure, he penned the following in his diary:—

"To take leave of my home, my child, my family, my flock, for so long a period, must be regarded, at all times, and under all circumstances, as a serious change; but to one in ill-health, with sensations of great weakness and infirmity, it is doubly serious; therefore I desire to record that I do now, in the presence of the all-seeing God, and of the attendant and witnessing angels, solemnly, deliberately, and, I would hope, believingly, commit myself and all my interests into the hands of God.

"I consider this the greatest of all privileges—to be permitted to give myself up to the custody and government of a covenant God. Take me as I am, oh! Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;—the God of my salvation. Make me what I should be; and do with me and mine whatsoever seemeth good in thy sight. I am a sinful, a blind, an insignificant worm. Thou art the infinitely wise, gracious, holy, faithful God; and therefore I flee from myself to thee; and desire to hide under the shadow of thy wings. I desire to place my soul and its weighty interests in the hand of Jesus; and the print of the nail in that adored hand forms my security. I give my health, my relatives, my reputation, my flock, my life, my all, to the care of Him whose is 'all power in heaven and in earth,' and who doeth all things well.

"Such is the uncertainty of all things, that I know not whether I may ever see this home again. Oh! that every sin committed in it may be pardoned; every stain it has received from the inhabitant be effaced; and blood divine, sprinkled upon the walls and doors, cleanse, and preserve, and sanctify the whole.

"In going abroad I entreat the presence of God. I hope I can say, 'If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.' I pray that I may find favour among the strangers and people into whose society I may be thrown; and chiefly, and above all, I beg that usefulness may mark my course. May the excellent savour of Jesus be diffused, and the great name of God be honoured! Lord, let thy blessing attend 'our going out and our coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.'"

At the outset of this journey, which was mostly performed in his own chaise, and by easy stages, he suffered greatly. But by degrees the change and rest recruited him; and he was enabled thoroughly to enjoy the lovely scenery of Cumberland and Westmoreland, which he surveyed with an eye that was fast losing the languor of sickness, and soon flashed with the brightness of renewed health. On his return, after seven weeks' absence, he found his people in peace; and large audiences, as before, ready to welcome his resumption of ministerial duties.

The distance of his place of residence from the chapel where he preached — for after residing in Charlotte Row, Walworth, for a year, he had removed to Addington Place, Camberwell—rendered it at length necessary that he should again live nearer; and so, in March, 1813, he left the spot where he had resided for eight years, and pitched his tent nearer to York Street; an arrangement which, while it had one drawback, as a too great proximity to a place of worship has to ministers, had many and special advantages, on which the people had certainly occasion to congratulate themselves.

Another preservation from death, on his journey to the West of England, in the autumn of 1813, is recorded by Mr. Clayton, with grateful acknowledgments of the divine care. But the most serious occurrence of this nature happened in the opening of the year 1814. His own words will best describe it:—

> "On Tuesday, January 25th, I left my own habitation, about ten o'clock in the morning, in a good state of health and spirits. After having paid several short visits to the sick and afflicted, I was attacked by an alarming seizure, under the influence of which I fell to the ground, and continued in a state of insensibility, for more than half an hour. Had I never awoke to consciousness in this world, where had my immortal soul found her abode? It pleased God so to appoint, that I dropped at the door of one who is numbered with my flock, and to whom, I trust, I have been made the instrument of spiritual good. Here every attention was promptly and cheerfully rendered; an apothecary sent for, without delay; and every

means used for my restoration. Confusion of mind gradually subsided; and I became, in a few hours, calm, collected, and tranquil.

"I cannot deny that the shock was severely felt. I was, however, greatly supported; delivered from alarm, and enabled, though conscious of great unworthiness, to cast my care, for time and eternity, on Him, whose sacrifice and intercession are my only hope. The world appeared to be vanishing: death seemed making his immediate approach: nothing but eternity was present. Then I found that none but Jesus could do me any good; because He alone can pluck the sting from death, and open the gate of immortal bliss.

"During the weeks of my confinement and convalescence, I have desired to have my ear opened to discipline, and to receive the instruction which my heavenly Father designed to impart. I have felt more than ever the uncertainty of life; the necessity of hourly preparation for the tomb; the importance of an interest in Christ; and of being found diligently attentive to the duties of our post and station.

"My affliction has been mitigated by everything that could soften and assuage it. My friends, my relatives, my neighbours, have been all kindness and attention; and I desire to bless God, who has done such great things for me. While I offer up praise and adoration to the Most High, I would earnestly beg the sanctification of this trial. O! let not the effect of the chastisement, as a stroke of moral discipline, be weakened by worldly objects, nor impaired by time. May I reap a harvest of present and everlasting gain; and so have to say, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'

"Never let me forget the sermon of my dear brother, on the first Sabbath that I re-entered my pulpit, 'Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.'"

In July of this year, Mr. George Clayton was called to occupy a rather novel position. He had gone into Lancashire, to be present at the festivities attendant on the attainment of his majority, by his cousin, Mr. Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall; between whom and himself a warm friendship existed. While staying with him he preached at several places; among others at Lancaster and Liverpool; in the latter town at the chapel which had been erected for the lamented Thomas Spencer, but which, through his early and sudden death, he was not permitted to occupy; and where, at the time of Mr. Clayton's visit, Dr. Raffles was labouring with brilliant success. But at the village of Wharton, in the same county, he found himself in the pulpit of the parish church; the clergyman of the place reading the prayers, preparatory to the sermon, which was delivered by his Nonconformist brother.

These days, now more than half a century ago, were hardly far enough removed from the time of Whitfield and Wesley,—when interchanges between clergymen and dissenting ministers were far from being uncommon,—to cause such an incident as this to produce any very great commotion. So far as is known, no notice whatever was taken of this breach of ecclesiastical discipline, by the superior of the clergyman in question; and certainly no proceedings were commenced, or threatened, in the Arches Court, against the bold Congregationalist minister, who had ventured into the forbidden precincts; but who, as the law then stood, and still stands, by simply preaching the Gospel of the blessed God there, had run the risk of an action, for brawling in an Episcopal church.

We can fancy the excitement which such an occurrence as this would now create; and the dreadful scandal it would prove to high-blown Churchmen, to have suggested to them the bare idea of a dissenting minister lifting up his voice, in preaching or prayer, in any pulpit of the Establishment. Yet worse things than that might happen; are indeed now happening to our

Episcopalian friends, as perhaps many of them know and lament.

Mr. Clayton's return home to Walworth was to the second reopening of his chapel, which had for some weeks been closed for repairs, and for the purpose of making enlarged accommodation for the ever-growing number of worshippers.

At this time his diaconate was greatly reduced, by death and resignation; and his mind was naturally anxious about obtaining suitable successors.

Among those who had been removed from the service of the church below was Captain Wilson, whose name has already been mentioned, as associated with York Street chapel. His history, although he died at a comparatively early age, was so chequered and romantic that a slight sketch will not be deemed out of place. I am indebted to my friend and brother, the Rev. J. Turquand, the co-pastor and successor of Mr. Clayton at Walworth, for the following particulars, which are recorded in the York Street Chapel Year-Book, for 1866.

"CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

"The following brief sketch of his life has been compiled, partly from the *Missionary Enterprises* of the martyred Williams; partly from an account of missionary ships, by the Rev. E. Prout; and partly from a memoir of Captain Wilson, now scarce, and out of print, very kindly lent by J. Newbald, Esq., for the purpose.

"James Wilson was the son of a captain of a vessel employed in the Newcastle coal trade, and grew up a rough and reckless sailor boy. When still a very young man, he was placed in command of a small vessel, bound to the Nicobar Islands, in the sea of Bengal. Shortly after his arrival in the East, he learned that the English army was surrounded by the troops of Hyder Ali, the warlike prince of Mysore; that their stores were nearly exhausted, and that a large French fleet had cut off all supplies by sea. Captain Wilson, at the request of the Governor of Madras, undertook to attempt a passage, with four store ships, manned by black men, in order to save his countrymen from famine and captivity. He performed this perilous service with great skill and success, and arrived at the English camp with supplies, when the troops had only a little rice remaining. Captain Wilson continued, amid much danger and many narrow escapes, to carry supplies to the army; but in one of his ventures, while in charge of a valuable cargo, he was taken prisoner by the French, and carried into Cuddalore, where he was given up, with three hundred other captives, to Hyder Ali for a large sum of money.

"No sooner did the captain find himself exposed to the cruelty of the Indian prince, than he resolved to make his escape from a slavery worse than death. One evening, evading the guard, he contrived to reach the ramparts of the fort in which he was confined, along with his servant, a young Hindoo boy. In the darkness he could not tell the height of the wall, nor the depth of the river which ran below; so, leaping at a venture, he alighted on his feet, but the shock was so great that he fell headlong into the river. By great exertions he recovered himself and landed; then, bidding the boy drop down, he caught him in his arms.

"The subsequent journey, first marked by marvellous dangers and deliverances, and then by capture and suffering, has scarcely a parallel. Making his way across the dead level and numerous rivers of that part of India, swimming the streams with the boy upon his back, he at length reached the last and most dreaded obstacle between himself and liberty. This was the river Coloroon—a river full of alligators. Worn out, and almost fainting with previous efforts, he trembled as he gazed upon the broad rushing stream; but the courage of despair and the love of freedom braced his nerves. He plunged into the foaming flood, which swept him swiftly towards the sea. How long he was hurried forward upon the current he never knew, for while swimming he either slept or swooned, but, strange to say, did not sink; and when his reason returned he found himself resting against the mast of a ship, or a tree which was floating down the stream. Having reached the opposite shore, he flattered himself that his dangers were past, and his liberty secured. But, alas! on ascending an eminence, to survey the surrounding country, he was perceived by some soldiers of Hyder Ali, who galloped towards him, seized him, stripped him naked, tied his hands behind his back, and, fastening a rope to them, drove him before them for many miles, under a burning sun, to their commander. When interrogated by one of the chieftains, he gave an account of his escape from the prison at Cuddalore; but the commander exclaimed, 'That's a lie, as no man ever swam across the Coloroon; for had he only dipped his finger in it, the alligators would have seized him.' Upon being convinced, however, of the fact, they all gazed with astonishment; and, uplifting his hands, the Turk exclaimed, 'This is God's man,' and so indeed he ultimately proved to be.

"After this, as a punishment for his attempt to escape, he was chained to another prisoner; and barefoot, naked, and wounded, was driven by brutal soldiers a distance of five hundred miles to Seringapatam. Some of his fellow-prisoners had pity upon his forlorn condition, and did what they could to supply his wants. One gave him a shirt, another a waistcoat, and a third a pair of shoes. But the cruel guards at the first halting-place stripped him again, leaving only a small piece of cloth to wrap round his waist. In the various villages through which they passed, in this long and weary journey, he was placed under cover, as an object of curiosity, and exhibited to the country people, many of whom had never seen a white man before. There he was forced to present himself in all possible positions, and to display all the antics of which he was capable, in order to amuse the bystanders, so that his conductors might obtain money at the expense of their poor captive.

"On arriving at the end of his journey, he was by day exposed to the scorching sun, and at night was thrust into a damp prison, without clothes, and almost without food. Here he was attacked by an alarming disease. Still his miserable condition did not soften the hearts of his guards towards him. They placed on him chains weighing thirty pounds, and at night he was fastened to a soldier. His bed was the earth; a few rags were thrown to him to wrap round his loins, and his daily portion of food was a pound of rice, which was so full of stones that he was compelled to swallow it whole. So great at times was the raging of hunger that his jaws snapped involuntarily, when his scanty meal was brought to him. Often the corpse was unchained from his arm in the morning, that another living sufferer might take its place, and sink under the same merciless treatment. What he suffered cannot be described, but may be imagined, from the fact that, after twenty-two months' imprisonment, only thirty-two out of a hundred and fifty-three prisoners survived, the rest having miserably perished. Captain Wilson was reduced to the point of death; and that he should have survived such accumulated miseries, for so long a period, was next to a miracle.

"At length the monster Hyder Ali was subdued, and the doors of the black-hole were thrown open; when, emaciated, naked, half starved, and covered with ulcers, the few survivors escaped. Captain Wilson now made his way to Madras, and, through God's blessing on the kind care of his friends, was soon restored to his former health and spirits. After a short time he went again to sea, where other perils awaited him. At Bencoolen, in the ship which he commanded, every European, except himself, died after a few hours' illness. Although in deaths oft, he did not recognize the hand that preserved him. During one of his voyages he had a pious missionary on board, as a passenger; and the infidel principles, and the careless conduct of the captain so grieved the heart of the good man, that he said he had more hope of converting the Lascars to Christianity than of making any impression on him.

"At length Captain Wilson had several successful voyages, and accumulated a good property. He then retired from a seafaring life, and settled near Portsea, where he was known, not only as a man of fashion and pleasure, but as a bold enemy to the Gospel of Christ.

"One day, however, when dining with a friend, he met a minister, who engaged him in conversation on the subject of religion. To him Captain Wilson vauntingly said,—'I have never met with a clergyman yet, and I have conversed with a few, that I could not foil in half an hour.'

"Notwithstanding this boast, an impression was made upon his mind; and on the following Sunday he was seen, to the astonishment of all, to enter the house of God where the young minister was to preach. The sermon was on the compassion of the Saviour, and His willingness to receive and to save all who come to Him in faith. During this appeal tears fell from those eyes which had never wept before. From this hour the captain made the Bible his daily study; and after an anxious struggle he declared himself a sincere believer, and became an eminent and devoted Christian.

"He now sought opportunities of doing good; and reading in the *Evangelical Magazine* that it was the intention of the London Missionary Society to send out a ship, he volunteered gratuitously to command it. Such an offer, from such a man, was received by all with wonder and delight. Many exclaimed, 'This is the Lord's doing!' and were more than ever encouraged in the great enterprise upon which they had entered. Thus sacrificing all the home comforts which he had gathered round him, he once more embarked upon the deep.

"Space forbids, or we should like to follow him throughout his interesting voyage in the ship 'Duff'—the first sent out by the London Missionary Society, and the precursor of the 'John Williams.' But we can only say that he sailed in August, 1796, with thirty missionaries on board, who were safely conveyed to the Marquesan, Tahitian, and Friendly Islands. After a most successful voyage he returned home, having been absent about two years; the missionaries having been settled, and everything having succeeded in accordance with the wishes of the directors and friends of the benevolent enterprise. 'This success,' says John Williams, 'in a great measure may be attributed to the skill of Captain Wilson, whom God raised up, and, by a series of events, almost without a parallel in the history of man, qualified to take charge of the expedition.'

"Upon Captain Wilson's return to England he settled at Walworth, and became a member of the church at York Street, shortly after its formation. He was the first deacon elected, and was one of the trustees of the chapel. Having married the only daughter of Mr. Richard Holbert, he was appointed one of the executors to his will.

"He appears to have suffered heavy affliction and losses, which he bore with submission and resignation to the will of God. His sight beginning to fail, he set himself to learn the more precious chapters of the Bible by heart, so that he might recall them, when unable to read. He derived much comfort from this course, and recommended it strongly to others. But the time of his departure was at hand, and he prepared himself to die. He was memorable in his eventful life, and remarkable in his triumphant death. On the 12th of August, 1814, at the comparatively early age of fifty-four, he departed this life, and his dying words were—

"'Triumphant now from sin and death,
From law and curse secure;
Peaceful I yield my parting breath,
And know my heaven is sure.'

"'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

"His remains were interred in the family vault of the Holberts, near the vestry windows."

Four new deacons were after this appointed, one of whom, Mr. Pelham Maitland, sustained the important office until his death, a period of thirty-two years.

Still the congregation increased, so that although the place had been twice enlarged, seventy applicants for seats were waiting for accommodation. "Thus, in Judah, things went well."

But Mr. Clayton and his family were not to enjoy the prosperity, with which God had visited them, without counterbalancing troubles. A family transaction, with which nobody on earth, save the members of that family, had anything to do, was, chiefly through the malignant conduct of one person—who, unfortunately, was a relative, and whose eccentric behaviour had for years been the subject of intense grief and vexation to his best friends—made the occasion of public notice and slander; and the low arts of the scurrilous caricaturist and buffoon were called into requisition, to give point to that malignity, and pain to its victims. The thoughtless public is ever too ready to welcome a high-spiced piece of gossip, especially if it be directed to any prominent and specially-successful person; and if he happen to belong to the ministerial order, the more acceptable are the accusations.

Were it necessary to state all the facts of the case, in relation to this matter, those who have been unjustly branded with epithets, derogatory and humiliating, would be found to have acted as nobly and generously as they have been supposed to act mercenarily, and with selfish ends. It is best, however, that such things should await the revelations and justifications of another tribunal than that of man. "The day will declare it."

Meanwhile, Mr. George Clayton was honestly and earnestly probing his own heart, in connexion with the duties of his office. Thus, in the autumn of 1816, he writes:—

> "When I lift up the veil from my heart, I am sickened and discouraged by a view of the abominations which disclose themselves. What a chamber of imagery! What a cage of unclean birds! What a sink of sin! It requires some courage to look at such a mass of moral mischief as I carry within me; so much pride, earthliness, and carnality; so much unbelief, sinful fear, and instability, that I am ready to doubt whether the cure is begun. But this I am sure of, that I desire to be made whole. Lord, I throw myself at thy feet, just as I am; earnestly entreating that thou wouldest make me what I should be. I long to find the rebellions of sin weakened, and the divine life growing stronger and stronger. I long to be what Christ is; to be holy, as God is holy.
>
> "At the sacramental table I gave three items of advice, which I pray God to enable me to take to myself. Never to let the

world come in God's room; to set apart some portion of every day to think on eternity; and to shun the company that shuns God. These things, duly regarded, will administer to the growth of religion in my heart, with a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. O, my Saviour! withhold not that supply, I beseech thee.

"When I look around, I am overpowered by a view of my mercies and comforts. I may say that God has 'comforted me on every side.' In my church I have abundant comfort: there all is harmony, peace, and love. No root of bitterness has yet sprung up to trouble us: no dissensions, no divisions are taking place, to weaken my hands and to grieve my heart. I trust God's blessed word is winning its way, and that the grace of the Holy Spirit is not withdrawn from us. My family, I bless God, is peaceful and happy. My beloved wife has been for some weeks in far better health than for several previous months; my dearest child is improving in growth and education. My servants are dutiful and obliging, sober and diligent. My honoured parents are yet spared to me. My brothers and their families prosperous and happy. No discord or alienation amongst us!"

On January 16th, 1817, a repetition of the apoplectic attack occurred, while walking with his daughter near Hornchurch, where he was on a visit to his father.

"Though the attack came upon me," he says, "without any sensible warning, yet I had a very marked preparation of mind for it; something amounting to a presentiment of its approach.

"An observation I made to my child, and a hymn which I was singing, afford me proof of this, in the recollection I have of the occurrence. Those words were peculiarly impressed on my mind, and had several times passed my lips:—

"'A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.'

At about twelve o'clock I actually did fall: whether in a species of apoplexy or epilepsy, I know not—'God knoweth.' 'He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust.'

"Here I would note the presence of my dear child, who, by God's ordination, was at my side, and was the instrument of procuring assistance. I might, but for this circumstance, have lain for hours—indeed till the spark of life itself had been extinguished. But 'the Lord was ready to save;' and she to whom I gave life, was the instrument ordained for the preservation of mine.

"Being on a visit at my father-in-law's, was also a circumstance I wish to record. In that house there were those to whom the sight of my sorrows and my supports, my affliction and the temper which, through divine grace, I was enabled to discover under it, will, I trust, be made useful. I pray God to own and overrule this providence, for so important an end! Then shall I glory in my infirmities, if my fall should conduce, in the most distant way, to the rising again of some lost soul from the ruins of the first apostasy.

"I cannot suffer to escape my notice the tender affection of my relatives; the sympathy of my friends; the prayers of my people; the supports of the Spirit. My calmness has been unruffled through the whole scene; and I have been enabled not only to acquiesce in, but even to approve and subscribe to, the dealings of God towards me. I trust I am humbly concerned for the sanctification of the event. I want to have Christ more endeared to me; sin embittered; earth renounced; and my title to heaven insured. O Lord, forbid that I should lose the benefit of this correction!"

When the thirteenth anniversary of his ordination service returned, he indulged in the following reflections, which show that familiarity with ministerial duties, and the frequent discharge thereof, had not diminished his sense of their magnitude, nor led him to glide, unconsciously, into a perfunctory fulfilment of them:—

"The Great Head of the church, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, has permitted me to witness another anniversary of my ordination to the pastoral office, among the beloved flock committed to my charge. I have held a day of abstinence; and devote a few hours this evening to recollection, self-examination, and prayer. I have now thirteen years to look back upon; and did my memory retain all the sins and failings which the book of God's remembrance records, I should be overwhelmed with shame, despair, and sorrow. Of those high duties which pertain to the Christian ministry, how many have been wholly omitted, and how many imperfectly performed! 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord! Mark with strictness my errors and offences, and I am undone.'

"I grieve to think of the muddiness of my motives, the slowness of my progress, and the coldness of my affections towards Christ, His kingdom, and the souls of men; and the miserable lack of personal holiness and spirituality. How just were it in the holy Lord God to take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth. O, my soul! burdened with these recollections, haste thee to the cross of Jesus, and to the footstool of a forgiving God! Pardon, pardon, O thou most gracious Father, the official delinquencies of thirteen years! If penitential confession takes the lead, in the sensations which pervade my bosom, admiring, adoring gratitude is impatient to pour forth her tribute of praise, at the altar of God. What shall I render for the strength afforded me; for the harmony and love subsisting between me and the dear people of my charge; for the many proofs of a divine blessing on my labours? O Lord, why me? That I should have maintained my standing for these years, is a wonderful evidence of rich, free, and sovereign grace.

"I have been perusing my ordination service; and I thank my gracious Master that I have not yet renounced my chosen office; nor sacrificed the truths I engaged to preach; nor become indifferent to the souls committed to my charge. I continue to this day, testifying both to small and great, that Christ is all and in all, the Alpha and the Omega. I thank God that I have lived to this hour in all good conscience; and that none can accuse me of riot, injustice, falsehood, or even, to my knowledge, of intentional unkindness. I have had a large share of prosperity and public favour, and these have a tendency unduly to elevate. But God, by various dispensations, is labouring to keep me humble, and to show me the vileness of my own heart. Alas! in many respects have I a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet and to humble me. Lord, sanctify, if thou dost not remove it, and let thy grace be sufficient for me!

"Help me, O Lord, now to set out afresh; and to aim at a more diligent, circumspect, zealous, and affectionate discharge of pastoral duties. Give me strength according to my day, whether that day be longer or shorter. Unable to look into futurity, I am sensible that my Lord's coming may be near. May I stand prepared; and receive the notice of His approach with firmness and with joy!

"I wish especially to commend my people to the benediction of the Great Head of the church. The young, the aged, the rich, and the poor; my friends and benefactors; my enemies and revilers; I beseech thee, O Lord, to think on them for good. Amen.

"*June 7th*, 1817."

About this time, he entered upon the occupation of Manor House, Walworth; with gratefulness of heart to God, for the comforts and advantages which such a home afforded him, and with earnest desires that no multiplication of earthly benefits should be permitted to wean his soul from his Saviour.

On his thirty-fifth birthday, when—as had been his custom, every year, on the return of that day—he sought the privacy of his study, for communion with God, his chief thought and prayer were in relation to the honour of his Master, so far as that was connected with his consistency, as a minister of Christ.

"I often fear," he says, "lest I should be left, in the sequel of my days, to dishonour God, and wound His blessed Gospel: and yet I think I can say that no thought of any possible calamity is so pungently distressing to me as this. No loss of property; no bereavement of friends; no decay of health; no form of death imprints on my heart so much of terror and grief, as the idea of grieving the Spirit; crucifying afresh the Lord of glory; and disgracing the Gospel I have so long preached. May God forbid it, for His name and mercy's sake!

"Lord, in the faith of the covenant, and of thy Son's blood, I now commit myself to thee; praying for a large measure of the Spirit's grace, to keep me near thee and for thee; that I may be spared and acknowledged to be thine, in the day of thy dear Son's appearing. Amen.

"*April 9th*, 1818."

And thus he recognizes "Ministerial Dangers:"—

"O for a closer walk with God! I see plainly that a man may be much engaged in keeping the vineyards of others, while his own is neglected. He may go from place to place, preaching, praying, speaking, instructing, and warning others; exciting the zeal and liberality of the Christian public, and yet be deceiving and neglecting his own soul; and beating out a pathway, through the sanctuary and its services, through the Bible and the plans of dispersing it abroad, to the damnation of hell, the blackness of darkness for ever! O my God, think upon me for good! If one of the ancients exclaimed, '*In licitis perimus!*' what will become of those who will find it to be their motto, '*In sacris perimus!*'"

In 1819, his parents, who began to feel the gradual approach of old age, and were by the marriage of their daughter, Mrs. Janson, left alone, came to reside with their second son, at Walworth. Mrs. Clayton's total deafness rendered her position exceedingly painful and dependent; and made it necessary that some one interested in her welfare should be at hand,—when Mr. Clayton by his public duties was necessarily absent,—who might, with due authority, direct or advise. As Manor House was capacious enough for the two families, and the son and his wife were supremely desirous to minister to the comfort and necessaries of their aged parents, this arrangement was mutually acceptable; and continued until Mr. and Mrs. Clayton retired to their country residence at Gaines, near Upminster, in Essex.

All this time, Mr. Clayton was not only labouring with great assiduity at Walworth, but giving much of his time and thought to extra-pastoral services. He, for many years, held the post of one of the secretaries of the Southwark Bible Society; and in the service of the parent institution, as well as in order to aid the churches of his own and other denominations, at anniversaries, ordinations, &c., he was frequently from home; always carrying with him, and leaving behind him, a hallowed influence; and permitted at different places and seasons to be the honoured instrument in the conversion of souls.

In April, 1820, the present spacious chapel at Above Bar, Southampton, erected to accommodate the increasing congregation attending the ministry of the Rev. T. Adkins, was opened for public worship; and once more Mr. George Clayton found himself among the attached people, in the midst of whom his earliest ministerial labours had been passed. He was invited, with Mr. Jay, of Bath, to preach one of the sermons on the day of opening; and this pleasing duty he performed, discoursing from 1 Kings ix. 3: "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever." As he had been blessed at Walworth, so had his successor at Southampton; and each had the most satisfactory evidences that he had chosen his proper sphere of action.

In 1821, he preached the annual missionary sermon for the London Missionary Society, at Surrey chapel, from the text, Ephesians ii. 11, 12: "Wherefore remember, that at that time ye were without Christ."

One extract from this sermon will suffice to convey a general idea of his usual style of preaching:—

"The circumstances which marked the origin and birth of the London Missionary Society, are such as, in my judgment, ought never to be forgotten. At a moment when infidel philosophy had succeeded in prostrating the human understanding, and demoralizing the human heart, and in producing a general convulsion amongst the nations of the European continent; when thrones were shaken, and sceptres tossed as feathers on the billowy breeze; when political changes were arising, with a succession so rapid as to perplex the wisest, and confound the most experienced observers; and when the eyes of all were fastened on the awful drama of revolutionary devastation; then arose, in the metropolis of Britain, that spiritual confederacy, of which it was the sole and simple object, to give a more universal extension to the Gospel of Christ, and thus to bring glory to God in the highest, to restore on earth peace, and establish good will among men. Then, amidst 'distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, and while the hearts of men were failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that were coming on the earth,' did this rainbow of mercy appear in the clouds. All who piously and attentively beheld these things, laid them up in their hearts, saying, 'What manner of child shall this be, rocked by the tempest, and cradled in the storm?' From a birth so portentous, much might be expected, and the event has more than realized the expectations which were formed. Forcing the consideration of the wise and good, from themes of secular and sublunary interest, all men were invited to apply, with increased energy and united strength, the only remedy for human corruption and human wretchedness. 'Come,' said this society, 'behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.'"

Year after year he records, with gratitude, the continued success of his preaching at York Street, and the peace of his church; and once more, and for the third time, the idea of enlargement was started among the people, and was soon after embodied in action.

In the meanwhile, as Mr. Clayton's parents had resolved to live in their own house at Gaines, Mr. George Clayton was not desirous to continue his large establishment at Manor House, where for four years he had resided. A favourable opportunity presented itself of disposing of the property; and having purchased an estate in Essex, bordering upon his father's, he designed to make that the place of his residence; arranging for being certain days in town, to attend to his pulpit and pastoral engagements; and, in the summer of 1821, he, too, took up his abode at Gaines.

Visits to Southampton, the Isle of Wight, and to Bristol, where he had the gratification of an interview with Mrs. Hannah More, made the summer of 1821 a delightful time of recreation. This was followed by the reopening of the chapel, after the third enlargement, by which an addition of from four to five hundred sittings was made. Notwithstanding this great excess of accommodation, the place very soon again became filled.

Chapter XVI.

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.—1822-1834.

RETURN TO LONDON.—MEDITATION ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW YEAR.—PASTORAL DESIRES.—REMARKABLE DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH.—LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EVENT.—DEATH OF MR. JANSON.—LOVE OF RETIREMENT.—RETROSPECT OF TWENTY-ONE YEARS' MINISTRY.—CURIOUS DREAM.—DOMESTIC SORROW.—DANGERS OF WEALTH.—SUCCESS AT YORK STREET.—REV. R. KNILL.—THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

THE change, which Mr. George Clayton had made from Walworth to Gaines, was found so inconvenient, that he was obliged to return to town; and his sister and her husband became the tenants of his surrendered dwelling. He had greatly enjoyed the quiet and retirement of the country; but as the facilities of modern travelling did not exist then, as now, it became impossible for him to keep up the pastorate at Walworth, and continue to reside at a distance of nearly twenty miles from his people.

It was with reluctance, and yet submission to the divine will, he tore himself away from a spot to which, though his enjoyment of it was but a brief one, he had become strongly attached. He now went to live at Herne Hill; with a growing conviction, forced on him by these repeated changes, of the instability of all earthly positions and comforts. Thus, on the threshold of the new year, 1823, he writes:—

"Another year of this mortal pilgrimage has flown away; and, on its rapid pinion, has conducted me into a new period of time. The year 1822 has retired for ever, and given way to 1823. A new scene of things opens; and it becomes every thoughtful, every serious mind,—it peculiarly becomes me, as a professor of Christianity, as a minister of the Gospel,—to pause, to reflect, to weep, to pray, to praise.

"In the midst of official duties it is possible for the thoughts to be so far distracted and dissipated, as to give little opportunity for collected, fixed, and salutary meditation, on the great points which belong to personal religion. And, alas! how poor, how sad a thing is it, to be preaching to others, and praying for others, if one should neglect preaching to his own heart, and crying mightily unto God, for his own individual salvation! If the great apostle of the Gentiles represents it as a possible thing that, after having preached to others, he might himself be cast away, how much more may I fear!

"'Lord, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new,
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain,
Which false apostates never knew.'

"Lord, I lay open my heart under thine all-seeing eye. I invite and entreat thine inspection and thy scrutiny. 'Search me and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!' Have I been losing ground, or advancing, in the year that is past? Is salvation nearer, or is it more distant? Which way am I travelling? To what goal tending? To heaven, or to hell? God forbid that I should deceive myself with vain words, or with delusive sophistries. O Lord God! enable me to deal honestly with myself, and to remember that—

"'Nothing but truth before thy throne
With honour can appear.'

"May I hope that my state is described in these words, 'faint, yet pursuing'? I trust I have not lost sight of the prize of my high calling. Jesus is precious to my soul. The savour of His priestly anointing is sweetly fragrant and reviving. His glory is, in some degree at least, my aim; and nothing is nearer to my heart than to realize, in my own experience and conduct, that apostolic saying, 'For me to live is Christ,' and to add, when I am summoned hence, 'to die is gain.'

"It is still a day of conflict with me, though the ground of the contention is somewhat changed. Now it is from the things of the world—anxieties, plannings, distrustful jealousies, complacent thoughts in and about the objects of this perishing state! The enemy has come in as a flood, with the pleas of lawfulness, necessity, prudence, foresight of probable evils; and my soul has been darkened, defiled, and disturbed. O Lord Jesus, preserve me from a worldly spirit, from a disproportionate musing, and a fruitless poring over earthly things! May I ever keep them in a subordinate place, yea, very subordinate; and have grace given me so to pass through things temporal as not finally to lose those which are eternal.

"O for a contrite spirit, a holy courage, a fervent faith, a more expansive charity;—even that love which is the fulfilling of the law!

"Uncertain what events this year will develop, I desire to seek preparation for God's holy will in all things. For scenes more shadowed, or more joyous; for the smoother or rougher passages of the journey, O Lord, give me the Holy Spirit for my guide; and then shall I be prepared to travel, to combat, to suffer, to enjoy, to live or to die. Amen and Amen."

A lengthened continuance in his work did not diminish his sense of its importance and responsibility, as the following extract of the objects of his ministry will prove:—

"What am I really proposing to myself, in the labours of my ministry? Fame or wealth, ease and popularity? I trust my conscience qualifies me to give a decided negative as to these points. To seek out the lost sheep of Christ; to feed the lambs; to defend the truths of God's holy Word and Gospel; to promote faith and holiness, zeal and usefulness, in the people of my care;—these are the points at which I desire to be continually aiming. Yet, how far short am I daily coming of the mark proposed! Dear Jesus, raise me higher! Am I living under realizing and awful impressions of judgment and eternity? Life;—how short! Eternity;—how overwhelming! What loud and impressive calls are continually made upon us!

How soon must the curtain drop, which will hide us from the view of all the living!"

How earnestly he pleaded for his people, in the silence of his own closet, let the following show:—

"Through the favour of an indulgent Providence, I have an allotted season of solitude. My numerous public engagements have taught me the high value of religious retirement. I love to be alone; and trust that I can say, with truth and sincerity, that I am never less alone than when alone. Yet have I deeply to lament the wanderings of a truant heart; and feel that when I would do good, evil is present with me. Lord, let thy good Spirit help my infirmities, and be my Teacher, Guide, and Comforter.

"This is to me a day which deserves to be particularly marked, inasmuch as I have been engaged in improving the death of an aged and much-loved officer of the church, of which I am appointed the overseer. For more than nine years he has gone in and out before us; and during that space of time he has been very pleasant, very helpful, and very ornamental, in his relation to myself and my people. I desire now to bless God for his coming amongst us, and for his having been preserved to a good old age,—even as long as he could enjoy good, and do good. His end was most tranquil, and marked by a heavenly composure.

"Never may I forget the hallowed chamber from which his spirit fled—'just on the verge of heaven.' O that I may 'die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his.' His dying words formed the text of his funeral discourse,—'My portion for ever!' O Lord Jesus, who hast graciously condescended to be the portion of our souls, grant that we may ever make up our whole happiness in thee; and never seek a portion in anything else!

"The death of our dear friend makes it imperative that the church should be called on to elect and appoint other officers, to fill up the vacancies which have been made in our number by death, or removal, or resignation. On this occasion, I would set myself to seek the Lord and Head of the church, by prayer fasting, and earnest intercession; entreating Him, for His mercies' sake, to guide us by His wisdom, to preserve us from all discrepancy of judgment, and collision of feeling; and to cause the Spirit of peace and love to abide and remain amongst us.

"Lord! I deeply feel how justly Thou mightest come out of thy place, to punish us for our carelessness, coldness, and unfruitfulness. For my own personal sins and miscarriages Thou mightest, indeed, enter into judgment, and scatter us one from another, and leave us neither root nor branch. But thy mercies are great; and, casting myself at thy feet, in humble prostration, I desire to entreat for myself and my beloved flock, pardon, purity, direction, and assistance. Leave us not, I pray thee, O Lord, for thy name's sake. Satan, that roaring lion, envies our prosperity, and would exult in our ruin. Destroy him; cast him down; let him fall by his own counsels!

"O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the God upon whom, as a people, our hopes and our happiness are exclusively built, send the Spirit of thy Son into our hearts; and may we consult only thine honour, and the good of thy body, the church.

"Let no root of bitterness, springing up, trouble us—no root that beareth wormwood and gall. Let those be chosen and appointed who shall approve themselves; men of prudence, piety, zeal, and kindness. My time is fast wearing away, and soon must I stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. O keep me humble, teachable, faithful, and zealous; yea, faithful unto death, that I may receive the crown of life. O Jesus, my adored Master, whom I so unworthily serve, meet us when we are assembled in thy name; and let the Spirit of truth and peace and love be in the midst of us, now and for ever!"

At the close of the year 1823, Mr. George Clayton, indulging in those meditations, which were so sought after and prized by him, penned some sentences in his diary, which, taken in connexion with what in a short time happened to him, and which is about to be narrated, seem to be singularly and strikingly anticipatory of a critical event in his history.

He had been preaching, at the last Sabbath service of the year, from the words, Ezekiel xii. 27: "They say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off." From this text he discoursed on the minister's duty, and the sinner's surmise; pointing out the fallacy of the insinuation, that the things of eternity are to be considered as distant;—and showing that, if they were, it would detract nothing from their importance and solemnity; but that in point of fact they are ever near at hand,—because life is short, and uncertain;—every rolling year bringing them into nearer view; and many of our kindred and friends having already been brought into immediate contact with them. He explained that the indications of decay in our own persons supply a refutation to the idea; and that whenever eternity approaches, it will burst upon us with amazing suddenness and solemnity.

In his reflection on this sermon he says:—

> "O the felicity of those who are prepared to meet this incomprehensible eternity which stretches out before us! Lord, I beseech thee to bring these reflections home to my soul, that I may feel and improve them; and walk evermore, as surrounded by invisible and eternal realities. How uncertain is all that is before me!—that is, so far as I am concerned. All is known to God perfectly; and is not that enough for me to know? Help me, O Lord, to cast all my care upon Him that careth for me; and let my mind be evermore held in sweet content, and a full complacence with all thy holy, perfect, and righteous will."

It was on the following Saturday, April 3rd, that he left home for the city; and having occasion to take a boat, in order to cross the river Thames, he was in the act of stepping on board, when he was suddenly seized with a fit; and, in a state of perfect unconsciousness, fell into the water. For a few moments he disappeared from view; and when again he rose to the surface, it was close to the bow of a barge, that lay moored near the spot where he fell; and underneath this the rapidity of the current bore him, a second time, from the sight of the bystanders, who set up a cry of horror and alarm. For a few seconds, the boatman who had been about to receive Mr. Clayton, as a passenger, stood almost paralyzed, on the brink of the river; but at length regaining his senses, and fully alive to the peril of the stranger, he leaped on board, and seizing a boat-hook that lay at the stern of his wherry, he thrust it under the barge, without any distinct idea of the exact position of the drowning man. Most providentially, he caught some portion of Mr. Clayton's dress, by means of which he was drawn out of the water; and, with the assistance of others, brought, though perfectly senseless, on shore.

He was immediately taken to a neighbouring house, and a medical man being sent for, the usual restoratives were applied, which, with the divine blessing, were at length successful in reproducing consciousness. After remaining a short time under the roof of his hospitable entertainers, and suitable clothing having been provided, he was able to return to his own home; being the first to inform his family of his imminent peril, and most remarkable preservation.

The next day was the Sabbath; and fearing that the shock which he had received from the fit, and the immersion in the water, would incapacitate him for preaching, he tried to get a supply for his pulpit. But he failed in his efforts to obtain help; and had to conduct the whole of the service himself, including the administration of the Lord's supper. To his great surprise, he was enabled to perform his duties without any perceptible diminution of energy, and with great satisfaction to his people; who participated in their minister's gratitude, for the sparing mercy which had been vouchsafed to him. He had never before been so near the eternal world, and the circumstance naturally produced the deepest impressions on his mind.

His fortieth birthday, which happened within a week from his merciful deliverance, was to him an unusually heart-searching season. Every year, this was a day set apart for special meditation and prayer; but this time he felt it to be one of the most solemn he had ever known.

"Drawn out of the water," he writes, "it seems like another birth into the land of the living; and I bless God for the renewal of life, reason, sensation, and the capacity for continued usefulness.

"'That life which Thou hast made thy care,
Lord, I devote to thee.'

"My marvellous preservation has been followed already by some consequences, which lead me to hope that I may appropriate the language of David, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' I have smarted under a discipline which I trust has been profitable. It has lowered and abased me even to the dust. It has quickened the sense of my dependence on God. It has shown me the vanity and emptiness of earth. It has led me to a renewed consecration of my restored faculties to God. It has awakened my sympathies towards others who suffer adversity. It has strengthened my purpose of a vigorous and concentrated effort, to secure the great ends of my pastoral office. It has led me to cast all my cares and devolve all my interests upon my covenant God; and I can say that I would not, on any account, have missed this heavenly correction."

He was desirous not only to derive instruction himself from this occurrence, but, as the subjoined extract shows, he strove to make it the occasion of promoting the good of others:—

"The casual introduction I had to a young medical practitioner, in consequence of my attack, will, I hope, lead on to some important results. I find him well read and clever; apparently modest, and open to conviction. But with all this he is tinctured (alas! and pretty strongly) with sceptical opinions. Lord God of the spirits of all flesh, I humbly and earnestly approach thy throne for this young man! Let his life be much set by, in thy sight! I now present my petition for the life of his soul. Give me this soul, and I shall glory in my infirmities, that they should have given opportunity to the exertion of the power of Christ in his salvation. May He who called Luke, the beloved physician, call this medical practitioner to Christianity, to hope, to heaven, and to God! Lord, give me wisdom to treat with him, and earnestness to plead with him, and firmness to defend thy cause, without fear or shame!"

The death of his brother-in-law, Mr. Janson, occurred at this time; and Mr. Clayton records the impression produced on his mind by the funeral solemnities which accompanied his interment; and which were carried out in accordance with those usually observed by the Society of Friends, of which community Mr. Janson was a member. They were noticeable for their simplicity; and the occasion was marked by the thoroughly evangelical character of the addresses delivered by Mrs. Fry and her brother, Mr. Joseph John Gurney.

Some years passed on in the usual routine of duty; public engagements still crowding in upon him, and requests made for services, which it was more easy to fulfil than to refuse; but ever was his heart craving for more quiet, and less publicity; a desire with which many of those most occupied can sympathize; but who know not how to secure it, compatibly with what are felt to be the claims of God and His church upon them. Thus he writes:—

"How sweet are these recollective hours, at the close of the day,—of the Lord's day,—at the termination of the active labours of the sanctuary! I have been, for these two hours, in perfect solitude. My beloved wife and daughter from home; my servants gone to public worship; myself left alone, to listen to the voice of the Lord, in the cool of the day; to catch the utterances of that blood which speaketh; to interpret the whispers of the still small voice, which are best heard when no other sound is stirring. O wondrous mercy, that God will grant these manifestations to worms! to dust and ashes! Though I have never improved seclusion as I ought, nor sought it as I ought, I do most truly love and prize it; and can say that I am never happier than when alone, and drawing near to the Lord my Redeemer. Lord, be with me in every solitary hour; and especially when, all alone, I shall cross that Jordan, on whose banks I have already sown too many thorns, whose sharp points can only be blunted by a free, a full, an irrevocable pardon!"

A retrospect of the ministry of twenty-one years led to these reflections:—

"On the whole, though condemned, absolutely condemned, on other points, I do feel that, in my preaching, to do good has been my constant aim and habitual desire; and it would be contrary to honesty were I to affirm that I had not, to the best of my knowledge, from the beginning, preached the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Yet am I greatly abashed, in my own eyes, because of innumerable sins and miscarriages which have beset me, through my whole course. Pride, and worldliness, and self-seeking, and undue regard to man, and too little dependence on God,—these are the things which humble, and abase, and confound me. I have therefore chastened my soul before God, on account of the sins of thrice seven years. I have fled to the cross of the adorable Redeemer, for pardoning mercy, and cleansing blood. I have sought a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon myself, and my beloved flock; and I shall now in humble confidence wait the fulfilment of the promise, and the answer of my prayers. O

Lord, 'cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me!'

"The gratitude I owe is, beyond expression, great. How thankful ought I to be for the measure of health and strength vouchsafed to me; for the help, intellectual and spiritual, communicated to me; for the pleasing tokens of success in the conversion and edification of souls; for the harmony of the church; for the degree of purity in doctrines and morals which, I trust, is to be found with us; for the increase of our numbers; and the enlargement of our borders! I am less than the least of all thy mercies, yet Thou thinkest upon me.

"Many are the sinful fears, and God-dishonouring doubts, which have thrust themselves upon me; but I have bade them depart, in the name of the Lord. 'Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I trust.'

"Finally, I renew the dedication, entire and unreserved, to God and my people. I have no one wish but to serve my Redeemer while I have any being; where, as long, and in whatever form He may appoint. But with my dear people I hope I shall be associated, until death shall call me home. O that we may stand in the presence of the Lamb, when earth and skies are fled; and pass our immortality in His service, and in His smile! Amen and Amen."

It is not an uncommon thing for persons of strong imaginativeness, when any unusual occurrence happens, that has been preceded by certain thoughts and feelings, which *afterwards* appeared premonitory of the occurrence, instantly to infer that there was a necessary connexion between such supposed premonitions and the fact; and this is often referred to, as confirmatory of the semi-superstitious notion, which is more prevalent than is imagined, that to some persons a species of preternatural intimation or warning is given, of an approaching calamity, or a descending favour—generally the former—so that the mind may be, to a certain extent, prepared for it. "Coming events," the proverb tells us, "cast their shadows before;" and these are deemed, by those who hold the opinions now animadverted on, sufficient in importance to warrant these preparatory warnings; although it is frequently found, on looking at the occurrences which are presumed to be foreshadowed, that they are often of so insignificant, and sometimes of so ridiculous, a nature, that one marvels they should ever have been deemed deserving of any pre-announcement, that seems to involve a violation of the usual order of things. If the Horatian advice to the poet—

> "Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
> Inciderit,"

be a judicious one, its soundness is certainly questioned by those who imagine it to be necessary that supernatural machinery should be put into motion for even the most trivial ends.

But such good people do not tell us of the many cases, where there have been as vivid apprehensions and premonitions as those of which they speak; which had, however, no sequel like that which is said to have befallen them. Perhaps, therefore, it was not amiss in Mr. George Clayton to record the following incident, which, in after days, he could look back upon, as correcting any over-credulous tendencies of which he might be the subject:—

"I am not given to superstitious imaginings; but last night, on my bed, just as my eyelids were closed in sleep, I had a sort of disturbed vision of the image of my dear wife, by the curtain nearest the window. She seemed to be hastily retreating from the bed, when I made a strenuous effort, as I thought, to retain her, but she as forcibly disengaged herself, and suddenly vanished. I looked in her wonted place, and thought I missed her; and not till I had put my hand upon her forehead, did I feel convinced that she was slumbering by my side. I do not in reality attach anything of importance to this circumstance; but it was altogether so strongly charactered, and productive of so powerful an effect of dread and solicitude on my spirit, that I thought it right to note it, whether it may or may not be followed by any remarkable results. She had, I thank God, been unusually well through the whole winter, more than for many antecedent years; so that there is no reason to apprehend anything ominous in the occurrence, though for the grounds above stated I have recorded it in this place."

At the close of 1829, a dark shadow overspread Mr. George Clayton's household, in the affliction of mind that overtook his only child; "the result," he says, "of a highly-wrought sensitiveness of mental temperament, and of a severe nervous affliction," similar to that with which her mother had been assailed at the same age; and who was then the subject of a depression so great, that it "threatened to unseat reason from her throne." In the latter case, however, the merciful interposition of God averted the calamity; in the former it had not so gracious a termination. Fever, languor, and nervous debility, were of constant continuance; and an unaccountable and perpetual silence, for some time, sealed the lips of the suffering one. Change of scene and society were tried, but in vain; a temporary restoration being soon followed by a relapse.

This trouble was the father's thorn in the flesh, that was not to depart from him; although he besought the Lord often, and with strong crying and tears, for this longed-for mercy. It became the skeleton of the house, whose presence told of the death of the fondest hopes and expectations, and dimmed the brightness of the flame of domestic enjoyment. The weeping ones could only bow the head, with meek submissiveness to the dark and inexplicable dispensation, and say, "It is the

Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good;" and from Him who had smitten them came the assurance, which was abundantly realized, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

With this brief reference to a sacred sorrow, which wrung the heart of the parents with unutterable anguish, but which was attended with the most sanctified results, the hand of the biographer must draw the curtain reverently over this mournful domestic scene.

God, who sent this affliction to the father, sent compensating comforts in his pastoral relationships; so that on the twenty-sixth anniversary of his settlement at Walworth he writes:—

"It is now twenty-six years since, by the providence of God, I was placed in the pastorate here. Through how many changes, trials, duties, temptations, and sorrows, have I been conducted; and what a miracle of mercy and grace do I appear to myself at this moment! I desire to give myself over, this evening, to a sort of pastoral scrutiny of my own heart and life. I would search and try my ways, as in the sight of Almighty God.

"*Pastoral humiliation,* very deep and submissive, much becomes me, in the presence of my great Master. O for a contrite heart, to mourn over my ministerial faults and miscarriages! I see such lamentable defects of motive, effort, and action, that if I were to spend twenty-six years in weeping over the sins of the twenty-six years that are gone, it might well befit so sinful and so unprofitable a servant as I. 'Lord, enter not into judgment with me.' I feel that I have done nothing well; that evil has been mixed with all the good; that I have not done half that I might for the beloved people of my charge, many of whom have passed into eternity, and I must meet them at the judgment-seat of Christ. O Lord! let it not appear that any have been lost through my negligence, coldness, or unfaithfulness. 'Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God—thou God of my salvation!' If the atonement, which I recommend in my preaching, were not prepared for the priests, as well as the people, woe, woe unto me!'

"'Jesus, my God, thy blood alone
Hath power sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make me white as snow:
No Jewish types could cleanse me so.'

"*Pastoral gratitude* becomes me: for I seriously question whether any minister, in any age, or any country, has had so much to be thankful for, as myself. In the peace, in the increase, in the kindness and sympathy of my flock; in their prayers, and in their fruitfulness, I have very much to be thankful for. O Lord, what shall I render? I am 'lost in wonder, love, and praise.'

"*Pastoral dedication and renewed consecration* form the desire of my soul, on this solemn occasion. Here,

"'Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do.'

Take me, purify me, use me for thy glory. 'Here am I, send me!'

"*Pastoral resolution* shall mark this day; for I would be more entirely given up to the good of the people, and the glory of Jesus, my Lord. I will, in His strength, aim to do more, and to do better, than I have yet done.

"*Pastoral hope* shall come in, to crown the whole. Wilt Thou not go with me, and bless me? Yes; bless me, more abundantly than ever. I ask much; I expect much; for I know who is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all I can ask or think.' O Lord, do as Thou hast said.

"It has been a day of clouds and darkness, as to my dear daughter; the domestic horizon has been quite obscured; but I commit all to God.

"'We, through the cloud, believe thy grace,
Secure of thy compassions still.'

"This week we set out on an excursion to Bath, Bristol, and Ireland. Lord, if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. In the whole of our journey do Thou go with us; bless us; keep us; and give us peace. I would stand prepared, by faith in Jesus, for every event; for pain or pleasure; life or death; usefulness in time, or blessedness in eternity. Number me, O Lord, among the righteous, and then all shall be well with me, both now and for ever. Amen.

"*Saturday evening, June 6th*, 1830."

It was with a subdued spirit he received the strokes which his heavenly Father laid upon him, and kissed the rod that was chastening him. His desire was earnest and fervent, that all might tend to the growth of personal holiness, and ministerial effectiveness.

"I bless God," he says, "that I am kept from murmuring; that I am enabled to see His hand in all these things; and to hope that it is the hand of a Father; that I can say, 'Not my will but thine be done;' and am assisted, through all the superincumbent gloom, to wait, and hope, and pray. I do not, I dare not, I cannot despair. For God, my God, is wise and powerful, gracious and kind. He cannot err. He cannot injure. Nothing can confound, or perplex, or disconcert Him. Without a God in Christ, I should despair, and even die; but 'the Lord is my light and my salvation'—my hope, my rest, my joy.

"My prevailing wish is the entire sanctification of the affliction to us all; that sin may be detected, embittered, confessed, pardoned, and forsaken. Lord, let the fruit of all be the taking away of sin!

"May Jesus be more endeared in His sympathy, power, and promise; and the Holy Spirit more sought after and enjoyed, as a Comforter, Purifier, and Deliverer. I pant for holiness; and long for higher measures of conformity to the blessed Lord, my Saviour. O to have a heart wholly absorbed, and taken up in and with Him!"

A missionary deputation tour, in Wales, and some of the western counties of England, in company with Mr. George Bennett, who, with the Rev. D. Tyerman, had visited several of the stations, belonging to the London Missionary Society, in India, China, and the

South Seas, was a refreshing relief to the cares and anxieties attendant upon his domestic sorrows. The effect of these cares upon his own spirituality was most marked. His diary, on almost every page, reveals that God was maturing the piety of His servant, by subjecting him to the fiery processes of personal and relative affliction. He came forth as gold; and his people, as well as himself, were rich gainers by the occurrence of these divine providences. The power and unction of his public ministrations were never so manifest as at this crisis in his affairs.

It was at this time, that certain unlooked-for circumstances happened, by which his position was materially changed, as to "this world's good." But the danger which might have resulted from unexpected affluence, and of which he was not ignorant, was to a great extent prevented by the severe trial appointed to him. Before he carried more sail aloft, the vessel was ballasted with a heavy weight of secret trouble; and if his course was not quite so swift and triumphant as otherwise it might have been, it became safer to all who were on board the bark.

Most mistaken notions had, for years, been entertained of his means; and of course rumour, with her hundred tongues, was ever ready to magnify his possessions; yet, when approaching fifty years of age, he could say,—"I have, from the period of my marriage, been comparatively poor, though seeming, and accounted of, as though I rolled in abundance. A competent livelihood, with many, and great, and undeserved mercies, I have most gratefully to acknowledge; but I have never been entirely free from incumbrance, while striving ever to keep within my limited resources." When, therefore, through the operation of providential events, he became a steward, to whom was committed a much larger amount of his Lord's substance than he had ever before possessed, he could say,—

> "God is my witness that I looked forward to this time with fear and trembling. An accession of wealth will tell very materially on my personal religion; on my domestic appointments; on my public exertions; on my ministry in the church. O Lord, grant that it may tell advantageously and usefully, in all these respects; and give what Thou wilt, or withhold what Thou wilt, only give thy servant a wise and understanding heart; with more of humility, faith, zeal, love, disinterestedness, heavenly-mindedness, superiority to this world, and assurance of blessedness in the next. Without this augmentation of spiritual and imperishable good, I cannot anticipate the improvement of my outward circumstances, but with terror and deprecation. Lord, sanctify all thy dispensations; and sanctify me by them, and by thy Word and Spirit, that I may be a vessel chosen, and made meet for the Master's use! Amen."

Once more Mr. Clayton changed his place of abode, and again returned to Walworth.

A visit to Bath, in the autumn of 1832, to preach for Mr. Jay, enabled him to renew his ancient friendship with one, whom he designates his earliest and best friend, Mr. Thomas Kingsbury, in whose house, he says, he found "the elements of order, devotion, and love, wisely combined; and forming a scene on which the mind could rest with serenity and delight."

Returning to his own home and flock, he notices with gratitude the harmony, increase, and blessedness which existed among his people—"rarely equalled, and never surpassed."

> "Is not the Spirit of the Lord amongst us? Seven young people are this day added to our fellowship; and five others are proposed for communion. More are coming forward to tell what God hath done for their souls, and that by my wretched

instrumentality. Since the Lord has so cuttingly laid His hand upon my natural offspring, He has raised up for himself, by me, a spiritual seed to glorify His name. O God of my fathers, bless all my spiritual children! Pour upon them thy Spirit. Write upon them thy new name. Keep them from falling; and let them be presented faultless before the throne. O may I see them, and rejoice with them, and praise with them, in thy presence for ever!"

The retrospect of this year enabled him to say:—

"Sixty-four new members have been joined to us, during the last twelve months; while six only have been removed by death, or other changes. Besides this, we have eight now proposed; and from what I see and hear, many, I believe, are under serious impressions; while there is a movement which augurs favourably, as to future additions to the church of God. That I myself have been strengthened, after twenty-nine years of service on the same spot, and when verging fast towards fifty years of age, is a miracle of mercy. Not one Sabbath, for some time past, have I been laid aside by illness, nor missed, when at home, a single week-day service. What thanks I owe thee, and what love! A boundless, endless store! Lord, help me to praise thee, and to bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar! 'Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day.'

"The future I am willing to leave, with full content and satisfaction, to my heavenly Father; only anxious to be found watching with Him, in real and close communion; in willing service, and social usefulness; and to be standing prepared for life, for death, and for eternity. Ebenezer! Glory to God for ever."

As his days multiplied, the labours of his hands increased upon him, and made even greater demands on his time and thoughts and strength; yet he felt, as many similarly situated feel—and with him it was an ever-deepening conviction—how desirable it was to get more alone with God, and walk more frequently on the silent shores, where is heard more distinctly the heavings of the eternal sea. But the round of clamorous duties pressed so upon him, that how to find the necessary leisure he knew not. Nor was he quite sure of himself that, if the leisure were found, it would be more wisely employed than his occupied time was now. Who cannot sympathize with these reflections?—

"It is, alas! many months, since I have enjoyed the privilege of spending a Sabbath evening at home, and alone. The continual reiteration of public services, with comparatively short intervals of solitude, constitutes one part of the cross I am called to bear; and one of the calls to self-denial, which, as a disciple of the Redeemer, He bids me exercise. To be incessantly before the eyes of others, and so little under my own, in self-communing; so little under that of my Father, who seeth in secret, is, as He knows, a real and aggravated trial. But I am always sighing and hoping for far more of voluntary leisure; and then I promise myself more of devout seclusion, more of converse and fellowship with my God and Saviour. But this may be delusion; the beau ideal of fancied spirituality and sentimental devotion! I know too much of my heart to trust it, in any given circumstances; and seeing that I do not adequately improve the leisure I *have*, there is too much reason to suspect, that if more were possessed, it might be as little consecrated to God's glory, and my own spiritual good.

"I have thought, whether erroneously or not, that while I am in full health and unimpaired vigour, it becomes me to undertake and perform as much as I possibly can, for the service of the church of God, and my fellow-sinners around me. The words of our blessed Lord are powerfully impressed on my mind: 'I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.' I expect that the evening shadows are hastening upon me, and perhaps the night may fall ere I am aware. O to be ready for that chill, dark night of the tomb! O to know whom I have believed, and to feel that I shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming!"

Mr. Clayton's love of all good men led him to delight in the society, and rejoice in the success, of all who laboured in the service of the Lord, whether among his own fraternity, or in other sections of the church of Christ. His ministerial status, and official relationships with some of the religious institutions of the great metropolis, frequently brought him into contact with persons of rank; as also with men who, though the multitude cared not to honour them with flattering titles, were, by the providence of God, called, either temporarily or otherwise, to fill a prominent position before the church and the world.

On the same page of his diary he refers to his intercourse with two men, very differently circumstanced, but each eminent in his own line of action. One was the Rev. R. Knill, who had recently returned from St. Petersburg, and who was at this period visiting the churches affiliated with the London Missionary Society, as a deputation. His extraordinary fervour, his impassioned and pathetic eloquence, his irresistible appeals to the conscience and sympathy of his audiences, produced effects, on the congregations to which he ministered, rarely surpassed by any orator. Young and old, learned and illiterate, alike bowed down before the simple but powerful and touching pleadings of this man of God. After one of his addresses at York Street, Mr. Clayton says: "The preaching of dear Mr. Knill—the missionary servant of Jesus Christ—in my pulpit, produced a most remarkable effect. A solemn heart-stirring sermon it was! The people were struck; and many were dissolved in tears. I was greatly affected and delighted; and thought it a high honour to have the devoted man among us."

"Yesterday," he writes in his diary, referring to another servant of Jesus Christ, though not a missionary:—

"Yesterday I had the honour of a visit from the Bishop of Winchester, who took his dinner with me, and afterwards strolled with me through the Zoological Gardens. He is a man of God, a fine example of a Christian bishop, and distinguished by manners most perfect,—combining all that is dignified with all that is graceful,—by simple spiritual piety, and by a catholic spirit of Christian love.

"I feel honoured with the acquaintance of such a man; so learned, so exalted, and pious. I felt my heart drawn out in prayer to God for him and his.

"I looked not on his mitre or stole with the least particle of grudging or envy. While I thanked God that the National Church had such a bishop, I was glad that I was not one in connexion with a community from which, as a State establishment, my conscience most palpably revolts. I am, I trust, a bishop of Christ's creation; an overseer and guide to the flock at Walworth, whom I truly love, and with whom I find it in my heart to live and die; devoted to their present welfare, and their everlasting good.

"*June* 1*st*, 1834."

Chapter XVII.

REV. WILLIAM CLAYTON.—1800-1831.

DESTRUCTION OF MANUSCRIPTS.—ENTRANCE ON BUSINESS AT MAIDENHEAD. —CALL TO THE MINISTRY.—STUDENT AT HOXTON.—SETTLEMENT AND ORDINATION AT SAFFRON-WALDEN.—MINUTE DIARY.—NEW CHAPEL.—LABOURS AND LIFE AT WALDEN.—ANECDOTE.—ILLNESS OF HIS CHILD. —MISSIONARY SERMON.—MILL HILL GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—INVITATION TO THE CHAPLAINCY.

In the last chapter, the memorials of Mr. George Clayton were brought down to the same period at which those of his brother John were broken off, with the design of taking up the floating threads of their respective histories in subsequent pages.

The attention of the reader is now called to some records of the youngest of Mr. Clayton's sons, a man in every way equal to his brothers, in intellect and culture, and pre-eminently distinguished by a naturally-sweet and most loving disposition,—adorned, and sanctified, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God. There is a charm about an innate amiability, which arrests the attention, and interests the mind of every observer; just as a landscape of soft and sylvan scenery attracts the eye of the traveller, and awakens admiration, even though the heavens above be clouded; but as the beauty of the view becomes enhanced a thousandfold, when from the blue sky the sunshine is streaming in golden showers, so when a natural benignity of soul is suffused with the rich glow of real religion, a sight of transcendent loveliness presents itself, unrivalled in the effect it produces on the beholder. Such was the aspect which the character of Mr. William Clayton presented, when contemplated as nature and grace had made him.

It is to his biographer a source of intense regret, that the sensitiveness and scrupulosity of Mr. Clayton's mind were such, as to lead him to give directions that all the records of faith and feeling, which had accumulated during a period of thirty years, should, at his death, be destroyed. Whenever such an injunction as this is given and obeyed, an irreparable loss is sustained;—so far as a knowledge of the process and progress of the workings of a man's intellectual and spiritual nature is concerned. By means of a thoughtful person's written meditations on great themes, and his recorded estimates of men and things, the development of mind and feeling in his soul may be discerned:—ever an interesting and instructive study. Of course, there are penetralia in every heart, into which no human eye should attempt to glance; and from the very threshold of which a right-minded observer would keep aloof. But if the sanctified experience of one Christian is to be made useful to others, it cannot but be a subject of lamentation that the opportunity for ascertaining its character and extent should be so irretrievably lost, as in the case before us, except as the *disjecta membra* of conversations or letters enable a biographer to form a judgment.

But Mr. Clayton's motive was so pure; the design so honourable to his humility, and so expressive of his sense of the lofty standard of Christian excellence,—to which he, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, felt he had not yet attained,—that, while regretting the destruction of his manuscripts, one can only breathe a benediction on his name and memory.

The brief account which is here given, is compiled chiefly from some fragmentary papers of his brother George,—who at one time evidently intended to draw up a more lengthened notice than that which appeared in the sermon, preached on the occasion of his death, and printed by his brother John,—and from the personal recollections of the writer of these pages, whose close intercourse with the subject of this memoir during the last two years of the latter's life—an intercourse, alas! so brief, but so delightful,—enabled him to form some correct estimate of a character which appeared to him at that time—and years, and a further acquaintance with men and things, have not diminished the force of the impression—to be one of the noblest and loveliest with which it has been his good fortune, through life, to form a familiar acquaintance. The rains and sunshine of a quarter of a century may have dulled the marble that enshrines the dead; but the tears of love, and the sweet though sad smiles of remembrance, have nourished and developed the flowers which the hand of affection planted around the tomb; and which, year by year, have sprung afresh, as from imperishable seeds, and still exhale a welcome fragrance to all who draw near to muse on the dead, and who delight to call to mind the many traits of excellence by which he was distinguished.

After leaving school, William Clayton grew up a fine, handsome lad, full of life and vigour; a buoyant, sprightly mind being enshrined in a well-built and symmetrical frame. With his parents it was, for some time, a matter of anxious and prayerful consideration, what course to adopt, in reference to his future career in life; and at length it was decided that he should enter into business.

During his father's occasional visits to Reading, while George was at school there, he halted often at the neighbouring town of Maidenhead, where several valued friends resided. Among these was the Rev. John Cooke, for many years the beloved and useful minister of the Congregational church in that place. Here Mr. Clayton became acquainted with Mr. Westbrook, one of his deacons, and a thriving tradesman of the town. After due consideration, and consulting with his domestic adviser, he came to the resolution of placing his son William with Mr. Westbrook, as an apprentice. This connexion, however, though mutually agreeable, was not destined to be of very long duration.

After a year or two had passed away, the youth gave unequivocal evidence of true piety, and at length united himself to Mr. Cooke's church. He engaged in prayer at the weekly social meetings; and by his gifts, his spirit, and his consistent behaviour, made a favourable impression on the congregation; and became much endeared to the minister, and to his flock generally. An opinion was expressed that he should not remain in trade, but devote himself to the work of the ministry. The subject was discussed at a meeting of the members; and it was resolved that he should be called out to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. He himself solemnly and prayerfully considered this summons on the part of the church; and, after advising with his parents, who, not without anxious deliberation and some hesitancy, assented to his wishes, his retreat from secular business was effected. His indentures with Mr. Westbrook were cancelled; and he entered Hoxton Academy, under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. Simpson.

Here he studied diligently; was uniformly consistent in his conduct; and preached with much acceptableness to the various congregations to which he was sent as a supply. Here, too, he formed friendly intimacies with several of his fellow-students; more especially with three, who attained to a high position in the Congregational body. These were the late Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., of Stepney; the Rev. Dr. Payne, late tutor of the Western College at Plymouth; and the Rev. H. F. Burder, D.D., of Hackney.

"On finishing the allotted term of study at Hoxton, he preached in various places, and won the hearts of all, by his frank and ingenuous manners, his amiable and cheerful spirit, his humble, circumspect behaviour, and by the manifestation of a decided and unaffected piety.

"At Cambridge, at Newbury, and at Edmonton, successively, he supplied the pulpit, as a probationer for the pastoral office; and at the last two places, if not at the first also, was invited to fix his residence. But there were determining considerations which led his own mind, and that of his wisest and best friends, to conclude, that the call of providence was not so decisive as to warrant his compliance with the invitations addressed to him from these churches. He was willing to wait; and while waiting he prayed that it would please the Great Head of the church to fix the bounds of his habitation.

"In the year 1807, he was asked to supply the pulpit at Saffron-Walden, in Essex, the church being then without a pastor. He consented to do so; and, after passing two or three months with the people, received a unanimous and affectionate invitation to become their spiritual shepherd and overseer. After much and serious deliberation, he met this call with affectionate readiness, and was solemnly ordained to the office of the pastorate, February 1st, 1809."*

On this occasion both the young minister's brothers took part in the service. The introductory discourse was preached by the Rev. W. Carver, who also asked the questions, and received the confession of faith. The ordination prayer was offered by the Rev. G. Burder; and the sermon to the people delivered by the Rev. W. Harris, of Cambridge, who, at a short notice, consented to supply the place of Mr. Wm. Clayton's pastor, the Rev. John Cooke, of Maidenhead, "who was prevented from fulfilling his engagement to take this part of the service by the high flood, which rendered the roads, in many parts of the country, impassable." As was to be expected, the address to the young pastor was given by his venerable father, who had the high and rare gratification, for the third time, to address one of his sons,—on this occasion the youngest,—in a solemn charge, founded on 1 Timothy vi. 11: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." This discourse, with others preached at the ordination service, was afterwards published. As in the previous addresses to the two elder brothers, there is in this the same fearless and faithful exposition of duty, presented in the most plain and uncompromising language. He neither disguises the difficulties of the work, nor the dangers of the workman; and certainly could not be charged with a failure in proclaiming the whole counsel of God, in relation to ministerial fidelity, in and out of the pulpit.

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* Sermon delivered at the Poultry Chapel, on the occasion of the sudden death of the Rev. W. Clayton, by his brother, the Rev. John Clayton.

In reading this charge, one feels as if inhaling an invigorating mountain breeze. It seems to brace up the soul to a holy resolve; and to compel the recognition of the necessity of an utter and everlasting abandonment of all trifling, all dilatoriness of spirit or action, in a work so momentous and great, as that of the Christian ministry.

The son was not unworthy of his sire, for faithfulness in duty: his official life at Saffron-Walden being a literal embodiment of the instructions he had received from the lips of his father.

After this solemn event in his history, he entered upon his work with yet greater ardour and characteristic devotedness of spirit: not content with fulfilling his ministerial duties to the people who statedly came to his chapel to hear him, but continually breaking up new ground, in the villages near Walden, in order to sow the good seed of the kingdom; obtaining suitable places for assembling the people together—a farmhouse kitchen—a barn or granary—which he had fitted up with benches, pulpit, &c., and got licensed for worship: for in those days this was a necessary precaution, in order to keep the congregation within the protection of the law, against vulgar, and not always ignorant interrupters of religious services, that were not held in the parish church.

The reminiscences of Mr. Clayton, as he was in those days, are very pleasant to those who can call up the memories of the past; mellowed as they are by time, and consecrated by death.

To eminent piety, and fixed habits of devotional converse with the Invisible, he joined a cheerfulness and hilarity, approaching to facetiousness, which made his company to be much sought, and his conversation to be highly appreciated. It was next to impossible to be dull or dispirited in his society. He had a large and generous heart, and refused no expense in his power, and in some few instances beyond his power, to serve and oblige others; and especially to promote the happiness of those immediately connected with him.

He, like his revered father, was remarkable for his love of order, in all things; and was so sensitive, circumspect, and guarded in his walk through life, that some persons thought his conduct savoured of scrupulosity, and approached to moral bondage. He had such deep convictions of the depravity, maliciousness, and wickedness of human nature, and its proneness to calumniate the innocent, and to magnify the infirmities of the good into acts of criminality, that he deemed it incumbent on all Christians, but more particularly on the ministers of the Gospel, to be doubly on their guard; to be incessantly vigilant; to be fully armed against the shafts of envy and malice; and to shun all those frailties which might soon be exaggerated into matters of reproach.

From the time when he was ordained to the pastoral office at Saffron-Walden, to the period of his sudden and much-lamented decease, he kept a minute diary, in which he noted with much brevity, and with scarcely any comments, the engagements and transactions of every hour of his life. These papers, in the course of thirty years, swelled into a large mass, which was destroyed—agreeably to his express direction—at his death. When questioned by his relatives, as to the reason of imposing upon himself so much labour and trouble, he would reply, that it might be an advantage to a man, under some circumstances, to be able to prove an alibi. By the course he adopted he could ascertain with precision where he was, how he was occupied, and with whom he was associated, every day, and every hour, for the last thirty years of his earthly sojourn.

Shortly after his settlement, Mr. William Clayton was united to an accomplished lady, the daughter of one of the trustees of Mr. George Clayton's chapel at Walworth: a gentleman distinguished by his prudence, kindheartedness, and generosity, and by the interest he took in the happiness of his minister, and the welfare of the cause of God. By this marriage Mr. Clayton was blessed with a daughter—an only child—whom the parents reared with the tenderest assiduity.

He had not been ordained at Saffron-Walden much more than two years, before the meeting-house, in Abbey Lane, became too strait for the worshippers. It was one of the oldest nonconforming places in this eminently nonconforming county of Essex—dating from about 1666; and, after the lapse of 150 years, required to be replaced by a new building, and one more in accordance with modern tastes in architecture. This was determined on; and it was Mr. Clayton's happiness to see the project carried out, from its commencement to its completion. He and his people entered upon their new sanctuary, towards which the friends and family connexions of the minister contributed handsomely, with high hopes and large anticipations, which were destined, in due time, to be fully realized. Thus the same honour was conferred upon the youngest of the fraternal band, which had been enjoyed by his two brothers,—that of either originating a new or a larger place of worship, in their respective ministerial spheres; and in this manner all were permitted to receive a distinguishing token of the approval of their divine Master.

To the increasing demands made upon his time and energies, he was promptly and conscientiously alive. As his sphere of operation enlarged, so did his heart and hands prepare themselves for wider action; and though residing in a comparatively quiet town—at some distance from the roar and bustle of the great city, where his brothers' lots were cast—living where more leisure moments could be snatched, than it is the privilege of the London pastor to secure, he nevertheless found his hours fully occupied; and, by devoted attention to the best interests of his spiritual charge, showed how desirous he was to make full proof of his ministry.

By careful study, by prayerful preparation, he sought to qualify himself to be a teacher of others. Nothing slovenly ever appeared in his public instructions. For the many or the few, for the Sabbath or the week-day, there was the fixed season for meditation, honestly spent. He read much and thoughtfully—laying up, with great care, in the storehouse of his memory, precious thoughts gathered in the course of his reading, which could be made available for the edification of his people; and eagerly following out the suggestive hints of his favourite authors—among whom John Howe, John Owen, Jeremy Taylor, Flavel, Goodwin, Bunyan, and the Henrys occupied the chief places—so as to develop from a small seed a rich and flowering plant, in which not only he but his people should delight. He literally answered to the description of the model minister of Solomon: "Moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth."

His indefatigable application to the duties of his vocation; his large catholic spirit, displayed toward those who differed from him in his opinions upon ecclesiastical matters, yet with whom he laboured in various departments of Christian duty—among whom were several of the neighbouring clergy—Professor Farish, of Cambridge; the late Bishop of London, then of

Chesterford, and the Rev. H. Bull, of Littlebury;—his zealous devotion to the local institutions of the town; his courteous manners; and, above all, his retiring modesty, and the lowly estimate he formed of himself, his attainments, and his doings, soon won many hearts, and earned for him golden opinions from all.

While his lips taught many, his life taught more. Not a few of the inhabitants of his adopted town, who were not accustomed to attend his ministry, could say,—"Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually." Thus, during the time of his residence at Walden, which extended over a period of twenty-four years, he evinced the qualities of a true Christian workman. He was instant, in season and out of season, in teaching, warning, reproving, and consoling; and many were the "seals of his apostleship in the Lord." The young people of the families of his flock, with whom, from his buoyant, happy spirit, he was ever a great favourite, and the schools of the congregation, engaged much of his attention. As a pastor he was constant in his visitation of the sick, the aged, and the poor; and with these various qualifications no wonder that under his presidency the church was increased and edified, and "the word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified."

In the summer season, as has been noticed, he devoted himself most indefatigably to village preaching, almost every evening in the week; and, like his great Master, went about doing good; seeking to win souls to Christ. In these voluntary, yet exhausting services, he took great delight; though he often walked eight, ten, or twelve miles, in going to, and returning from, the places which he visited as a home missionary;

while at the same time it generally happened, that the conduct of the psalmody, the reading of the lessons, and the prayers, as well as the sermon, devolved exclusively on himself.

At this period of his life he was blest with robust health, and a measure of athletic power which performed feats, in the way of duty, almost incredible; so that some sportively gave him the name of "the Giant;" a designation which seems to have been justified by the following amusing incident:—

On a certain afternoon, in the month of June, he set forth, accompanied by his daughter—who was occasionally his associate in his preaching travels—to a village about four miles distant from his home. The weather was intensely hot; which led him to procure a donkey-cart, for easier transport from one place to another. He had driven through several fields—for there was no turnpike road—until he came to the last, which was of considerable extent; and with the barn in which he was to preach, in view. To his great mortification, he discovered that the gate of this field was fastened, and strongly barricaded. What was to be done? No vociferation on his part, had he tried it, could have been heard; no human being was near, to afford help in this emergency; and as the time for commencing the service was fast approaching, nothing remained but that, summoning all his energies, he should literally put his shoulder to the wheel. He first lifted his daughter over the gate, and provided for her safety. This done, he unharnessed the donkey, and lifted the cart over the gate, in like manner. But the most difficult part of the effort remained to be accomplished. Nothing daunted, however, he grasped the donkey, and with one powerful effort succeeded in placing the animal on the other side, to the astonishment, yet to the great amusement and joy, of his young companion. He then proceeded on his way, and joined the congregation punctually at the hour of worship.

To some persons this exploit may appear almost incredible; but to those familiar with his muscular form, and physical power, it will be known to be quite in keeping with his efforts, both on ordinary and extraordinary occasions.

Without any particular occurrences to vary the routine of a country pastor's life,—except occasional visits to London, where he from time to time occupied some of the metropolitan pulpits, with great acceptance; and renewed, amid the scenes of his early domestic life, his intercourse with beloved friends,—his days glided onward, peacefully and happily. Once a dark shadow seemed for a while to gather around his dwelling, in the dangerous illness of his daughter. At a period of opening youth, when every fibre of the parental heart has fixed itself so firmly around the child, that to touch the one is to send a thrill of agony through the other—"seeing his life is bound up in the child's life"—she was attacked by a dangerous illness that threatened her existence, and that awoke in the hearts of her parents and relatives great anxiety, and excited deep sympathy among all who knew and loved the afflicted family. But "God had mercy on them;" the fears of their heart were removed; and the even current of domestic and ministerial life, which had been broken by this temporary obstruction, flowed on smoothly again, beneath the bright sunshine of a cleared and unclouded sky.

In 1828, Mr. William Clayton, following his two elder brothers, who had engaged in a similar special service, preached one of the May sermons for the London Missionary Society, at Tottenham Court Road chapel, from the text, 3 John 7, 8: "Because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth."

This was a much more lengthened and elaborated discourse than was either of those delivered by his brothers, on the same theme. One extract may be given, which will enable the reader to judge of the literary merits, as well as the missionary spirit, of the sermon:—

"Observe the high and sublime motive by which these primitive servants of the cross were inspired, as denoted by the comprehensive phrase, 'Because for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.' Love to their Lord and Master was the mainspring of all their endeavours,—the life-blood of their zeal. Love is the fulfilling of the royal law. Not only did His personal excellencies attract their admiration, and secure their attachment, but an individual persuasion of vast and boundless obligation to Him. Affection to the Saviour; ardent and inexpressible gratitude, were the strong, impulsive, and imperishable principles of their activity. These are motives of constantly-accumulating power; and urge with augmenting influence to persevering diligence. 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.'

"The first heralds of salvation were men of genuine and unsuspected personal religion; and enjoyed, as the special qualification and the general accompaniment of extraordinary service and suffering, an abiding sense of their interest in the Redeemer's favour and mercy.

"A sense of pardoning grace, combined, as it invariably is, with deep and humbling views of unworthiness and guilt, producing abhorrence of sin, and an ardent thirst for progressive conformity to the image of Christ, has ever been found the true and efficient cause of good works. Hence sprang the transcendent diligence, and the more abundant labours, of one who considered himself as less than the least of all saints; and who appears at a loss for terms adequately vigorous to express his affectionate gratitude to Him who put him into this ministry, and bestowed upon him this distinguished 'grace' or privilege, that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. His ardours were so intense, that his carnal or less spiritual friends were disposed to pronounce his zeal excessive and irrational. Like his great Lord and Master, whose fervours he emulated, he was considered as 'beside himself.'

"For the same degree of enthusiasm which exalts a painter or a poet to the highest pinnacle of fame, places a preacher or a missionary on the world's pillory, and assimilates him to the 'despised and rejected of men.' Patriotism, indeed, and impassioned ardours for secular objects, have covered a multitude of sins. All relative charities, and life itself, have been deemed a cheap sacrifice at the altar of national liberty. Our youth are early taught to applaud to ecstasy the Roman patrician, who sacrificed his life for the supposed good of his country, by leaping into the gulf, to which he was impelled by the ambiguous oracle of a blind superstition; but men who would act with equal determination, to save souls from eternal woe, are everywhere spoken against.

"Such dormant prejudices and sophisms are to be dispersed only by the just appreciation of invisible realities, and by a supreme and ascendant love to the Redeemer. How high and awful a function is that which proposes to establish in the soul an interior dominion, to illuminate its powers by a celestial light, and introduce it to an intimate, ineffable, and unchanging alliance with the Father of spirits! The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the Christian ministry, our right arm is withered; nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains; for no man ever excelled in a profession to which he felt not an attachment bordering on enthusiasm; though what is enthusiasm in all other professions, in this is the dictate of sobriety and 'truth.'

"Such sentiments and conclusions are not only sustained by the most lucid and convincing arguments, but sanctioned by observation, and by the practical experience of men in ancient and modern times. The hallowed enthusiast (for I glory in the term) has effected wonders; and when his fervours have intermitted, he has renewed their warmth and influence by recollections of a Saviour's love, indefatigable benevolence, and unparalleled sufferings. In all parts of his history, from the infantile cry at Bethlehem, to the awful groan on Calvary, there is a holy and efficient excitement. When Buchanan's firm and steady mind was momentarily discouraged by unexpected opposition, and by unforeseen obstacles, he was conscious of a gloom and chill worse than those produced by nocturnal vapours. The appearance of a star in the heavens, brought to his remembrance, so seasonably and forcibly, another Star which he had seen in the East, that he thanked God and took courage. When the devoted Henry Martyn, by bodily pain, and by mental suffering, was ready to despair even of life, the occasional shelter from an almost vertical sun, and from parched sands, which he obtained in a stable, so refreshed his spirit, by leading him into a train of holy cogitations concerning the Child born, and the Son given, and for whom there was no room in the inn, that he became as a giant refreshed by sleep, and awoke to more strenuous and persevering efforts. Are these fanatics? A fanatic can never be permanently and consistently virtuous. And is this fanaticism?—fanaticism, which invariably debases both the intellectual and moral powers of the heart? Are these the emotions of ignorant, or hardened, or perverted minds? Are not here the finest sensibilities excited, by an intelligent reminiscence of scenes which were the admiration of angels, and produced the veneration and offerings of the wise men, and have fed the flame of piety and devotion through the long succession of revolving centuries?"

After passing twenty-four years of the prime of his life at Saffron-Walden, Mr. Clayton received an invitation to take the office of chaplain to the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School, at Mill Hill, Hendon.

This scholastic establishment was founded in 1807, for the purpose of affording a first-rate liberal education to the sons of gentlemen, who were debarred, by the ecclesiastical arrangements of other large public schools, from sending their children thither. Situated in one of the loveliest neighbourhoods of the metropolis, on a hill whence could be seen the spire and buildings of the village of Harrow, the establishment at Hendon commenced its career, in a noble rivalry with its more time-honoured and renowned competitor. A beautiful valley lay stretched out between the two hills on which the schools are built, and over this extent of country—a fair specimen of cultivated England,—rich in farms and verdant meadows, that form part of the demesnes of wealthy residents and proprietors; with here and there a diminutive village, whose smoke could be seen rising above woods and plantations that dotted the landscape,—the spirit of peace seemed ever to brood; suggestive of the thought that between the two establishments no other rivalry need exist than that of each striving, frankly and honourably, to outdo the other, in most effectively educating the eager and aspiring youth, who came thither to receive instruction and guidance. The mental athletes could, by hardy and vigorous exercise, in their several palæstra, prepare themselves, within sight of each other, for the time when, in the actual and serious contests of life, they should prove the worth of their respective trainings.

About the time negotiations were commenced with Mr. William Clayton, to become the chaplain of the institution, and the pastor of the village church, which had existed since 1728, the school was passing through a crisis in its history. It had foes without, and there were fears within. It evidently needed some resuscitating power to be at work; the infusion of new vigour into all the departments of official life; and the presence of one who, to the exercise of a kind, yet firm and wise control over the establishment, should be able to add an influence upon the world and the church without; so as to awaken a well-grounded expectation in the judicious management of the institution; and lead the chief men among Dissenters and liberal-minded Church-people, fearlessly to confide in the judgment and good feeling of those into whose hands the highest interests of their children might be committed.

In looking round, with no small anxiety and care, for a suitable person in whom this great trust could be reposed, the attention of the committee of the Mill Hill school was directed to Mr. William Clayton. His own position in the Congregational body—as a minister who, for nearly a quarter of a century, had presided over a most respectable provincial congregation,—and his connexion, through his father and brothers, with three of the most important and influential churches in London; above all, his high character for prudence, judgment, and simple yet ardent piety, and his well-known affection for the young, seemed to mark him out, above all others, as fitted for the post to which, with the hearty concurrence of the friends and supporters of the institution, the committee invited him. It was believed that his acceptance of the office would, by the blessing of God, bring back to the school its former prosperity, and insure even a larger amount of efficiency and success.

At the time he received the invitation of the committee, there were circumstances, of a personal nature, which seemed to indicate that a change of position would be desirable. He would not be necessitated, by accepting the invitation to Mill Hill, to forego his ministerial duties, or his pastoral relationships, both of which were to him sacred pleasures as well as obligations; while he would be brought into a more immediate intercourse with his revered parents, now advanced in years, and other near and dear relatives. But the chief and all-powerful incentive to compliance with this invitation was the fact, that he would thereby be brought into direct contact with young minds, belonging to the *élite* of Nonconformist families, as well as others, at the time they were passing through their educational course. These, he knew, were destined, in future life, to form no inconsiderable portion of the mercantile, scientific, and religious population of the kingdom; and so he felt that it was impossible to exaggerate the importance of the post filled by a chaplain to such an institution, with these opening and ingenuous minds continually at hand to receive the influences and teachings of an earnest Christian minister, intent upon the grand object of securing them all for the service of Christ.

After weighing these considerations in the balances, with his characteristic caution, and with a conscientious regard to the will of God, he resolved to resign his charge at Saffron-Walden, after a union of nearly a quarter of a century, and to accept the chaplainship at Mill Hill. This he did, and in the spring of 1831 left the scene of his early labours, in the midst of unequivocal tokens of regret, on the part of those before whom he had gone in and out, for so lengthened a period, and took up his abode at Hendon.

Chapter XVIII.

REV. WILLIAM CLAYTON.—1831-1838.

CHAPLAINCY AT MILL HILL.—NEW CHAPEL.—SUCCESS.—ATTACHMENT TO THE YOUNG.—INTERESTING ANECDOTE OF THE EARL OF C——.—MR. CLAYTON'S CLOSING LABOURS.—PREMONITION OF SUDDEN DEATH.—VISIT TO LONDON.—LAST MOMENTS.—AFFECTING SCENE AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE AT MILL HILL.—INTERMENT IN BUNHILL FIELDS.—RETROSPECT OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

MR. WILLIAM CLAYTON entered upon his new scene of duty with no small amount of diffidence, and with much anxious prayerfulness; relying, not on his own resources or capabilities, but on the promised strength of Him who has said, "I will be with thee in all places whither thou goest; my presence shall go with thee; my grace is sufficient for thee."

He soon won the confidence and esteem of all with whom he stood connected. The committee of management did everything in their power to strengthen and encourage him in his labours, by their willing co-operation and liberal supplies. The masters welcomed the new chaplain with much respect and friendliness; while, attracted by his gentlemanly manners, practical wisdom, and consistent example, they were aroused to new energy; and aided him in all acts of moral discipline, and in all his plans and efforts, within his prescribed sphere, for the benefit of the scholars.

On Monday, May 16th, he was solemnly set apart to his office, at a devotional meeting, held in the chapel belonging to the school. At the same time, the Rev. H. L. Berry was inducted into the head-mastership.

The Revs. T. Binney, A. Stewart, of Barnet, and the Revs. J. Burnet, of Camberwell, G. Clayton, E. Steane, and others, took part in the service. In the unavoidable and regretted absence of Mr. Clayton's father, Dr. Pye Smith, of Homerton College, delivered an excellent and affectionate charge to the newly-elected chaplain; while the Rev. Joseph Berry addressed his son.

Through the blessing of God upon the labours of Mr. Clayton, and with a desire to provide a place of worship for the school and the neighbourhood, more in accordance with the reputation of the place, a new and elegant chapel was erected in 1832. He was indefatigable in his efforts in connexion with the rearing of this structure; and had the pleasure, in a short space of time after the laying of the foundation-stone, of seeing it dedicated to the service of God, and entering upon it himself, as the scene of his latest ministerial labours—labours, alas! to be soon brought to a close. But of this he had then no premonitions; and he and his friends, who contemplated his position in the midst of young people gathered from all parts of the kingdom, as fraught with the highest possible results, fondly anticipated for him a long career of extended usefulness.

From a survey of the seven years during which he presided over this important establishment, it is evident that the blessing of God rested on his varied labours, for the good of all those with whom he was connected. The pupils reverenced and loved him; the masters regarded him as an acceptable fellow-labourer, and a sincere friend; the household servants were taught by his example, and won by his kindness; the church and congregation, with which he was associated in the fellowship of the Gospel, flourished under his care; while he zealously and efficiently encouraged and directed the efforts made by the school, by the worshippers of the chapel, and by others in the village, on behalf of the Bible Society, the Missionary Society, and other benevolent institutions. It is only when the books shall be opened, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed in the light of eternity, that it will be fully known how many of the young were savingly impressed by his private discourses—always accompanied by prayer; and how many of the adult population were turned to righteousness and to God, by his public ministrations.

He was not satisfied with a mere routine of service. He was ever casting about for some fresh mode of interesting his youthful charge in holy things; and one of his most successful methods of awakening attention to them was to win the affections of the pupils towards himself, as their teacher, and God's ambassador. This was generally no difficult task, with one who was so eminently calculated to gain the love of those with whom he came in contact. Having secured this as a fulcrum on which to work, he sought, by earnest, simple, and manly, yet tender expostulations, appeals, warnings, and invitations, to bring to thoughtfulness the naturally wayward heart of youth. Nor did he labour in vain. There rose up around him reflective lads, who reciprocated his regard; listened reverently to his counsels; and gave full proof of their wisdom and worth, by a choice of the service of Christ. Some, now in the ministry of the Gospel, and others, sustaining honourable positions in the church and the world, can bear their grateful testimony to the value of his instructions.

Every morning, before family worship, some one of a number of the boys,—to whom, as a special mark of favour, on account of excellence of conduct, and diligence in study, the privilege was accorded of private friendship,—was received in his study, for a quarter of an hour's conversation,—always terminated by a short prayer. There are some now living who remember, with a thrill of gratitude and affection, that prized and happy season. They can recall to mind the wise advice, the loving admonitions, and the words of encouragement that fell from his lips; while his beaming countenance, radiant as a glow of sunshine, proclaimed the parental tenderness that dwelt in his heart. Every boy, when he went forth from his presence, carried with him to the religious service that immediately followed, in the hall of the school, a conviction that the chaplain, who led their devotions, had the best interests of the pupils at heart; and each day, one young spirit, at least, knelt down with a soul chastened and sanctified, by the sweet moral influence which had been brought to bear upon it.

I cannot forbear recording an incident, which occurred while I was once travelling with him, in Hampshire, as illustrating his interest in the young, and his singular tact, in striving to benefit strangers, by a word in season.

We were walking upon the hard at Portsmouth, when a small boat, from a man-of-war that lay in the harbour, touched the shore, and two young midshipmen stepped out. Mr. Clayton directed my attention to the lads, and said, "What an open and noble countenance that younger boy has! He is a gentleman, evidently, from his bearing; any mother's heart must be anxious about such a son, in such a profession. I'll go and speak to him; perhaps God may bless what I say: and in the perilous position he occupies, on board a man-of-war—one of peril both to body and soul—a stranger's word of warning and advice may be of service."

Suiting the action to the word, he walked up to the midshipmen, and, in his well-known, courteous, and winning manner, asked some question concerning the ship and themselves, to which they readily replied. He then glided away, by a natural, easy transition, to higher and more solemn topics. As he spoke the lads listened; —at first with surprise; then with evident interest; and at length with deep emotion; and when, pointing to his clerical dress, he said, " Gentlemen, you will, I am sure, pardon my earnestness and freedom, when you recognize my profession, as a minister of Christ," they took off their caps and bowed low before him. In a strain of exquisite adaptation to his young auditors' position and inexperience, and in tones of melting tenderness, he besought them, by the memories of home, by the love of mother and sister, and by a regard for their own souls, to guard against the sinful influences to which, in the presence of so many who had no fear of God before their eyes, they would be exposed; and bade them remember how often, when on the wide deep, it would be literally true that there was " but a step between them and death."

When he had ended these remarks, he asked them each to receive a little book which he offered them,—I think it was James's *Anxious Inquirer*, or the *Young Man from Home*,—and inquired their names, that he might remember them in his prayers, with a special petition. This, he assured them, he would present to God, while they were on the voyage which, as they had informed him, they were to commence in a few days. They accepted the books with a quivering of the lip, which told that his words had not fallen on unsusceptible hearts; and stood with bared heads, as, with his own lips trembling with emotion, he ejaculated a benediction upon them.

"But your names, young gentlemen?" said he; as after having given them the books, he shook hands with them, and was about to turn away.

"Mine," said the tallest youth, "is ——; and my friend is the eldest son of the Earl of C——."

I do not give the names, for obvious reasons; but it is with a glow of grateful feeling I record the fact, that it is borne now by one, whose piety and philanthropy adorn him more than his coronet; and, judging from the lapse of years, and the age of the present wearer of the title, I conclude, with almost positive certainty, that he is the midshipman in whom my departed friend was so deeply interested. If so, I have pleased myself with the thought that, not improbably, Mr. Clayton's interview with him on the hard, at Portsmouth, was a turning-point in his history.

The interesting course of things at Mill Hill was not ordained to be of long continuance. Mr. Clayton's health fluctuated a good deal, in the last year of his service at the school,—although there were no very marked symptoms of disease; certainly none that were urgent or alarming. He consulted one or two physicians of celebrity, who prescribed for him; but without prognosticating any imminent danger, whatever might have been their private opinion.

On Saturday, April 4th, he commenced a course of lectures on the life and character of Elisha—designing to make the several incidents in the history of the prophet illustrative of certain great religious truths, for which he was anxious to gain admission into the hearts of his youthful auditors; having found, by experience, that no more effectual method for attaining this object could be employed than by such a style of teaching. The first lecture was on the fact of Elisha's entrance upon his prophetic office, symbolized by his assumption of the mantle of his predecessor; and, naturally, he had to discourse on the translation of Elijah, as the great occurrence attendant on, and preparatory to, that investiture. After the service was finished, and he had retired to the vestry, he spoke on the theme of his discourse to one of the friends of the congregation; and especially referred to the subject of sudden death; and as though, for a season, the prophetic mantle had descended on the preacher, he remarked,—and how vividly the words were remembered afterwards, when death seemed to set a solemn seal on them, as though spoken from God, may well be imagined,—"It is probable that I shall leave you in an unexpected moment: they shall seek me in the morning, and I shall not be."

That this was not a mere momentary impression, but had long been a presentiment of his mind, is evident from the closing paragraph of a work which Mr. Clayton published, while at Saffron-Walden, called *The Invisible Hand*. Referring to the contents of the book, and his design in writing and sending it forth, he says:—

> "To lead persons to an acquaintance with themselves, and their own affairs, has been the object of the previous detail. In scenes of affliction, the sentiments there illustrated have been the sweet solace of the writer's mind. He has invariably found, that events in his retired life, which were unpropitious in aspect, or mysterious in their language, have been the messengers of favour, and tended to a consummation devoutly to be wished. With these views, he, from the loophole of retreat, looks at an agitated and tumultuous world. As darkness is dispelled, there appears confusion among the atoms which before fluctuated unseen in the atmosphere. Their manifestation ought not to distress the observer. It shall at length be clearly evident,

that He hath done all things well; and warrant the acclamation of angels and beatified spirits: 'Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.'

"As to what concerns himself, daily expecting the summons to leave this state, where even the light of Goshen is but comparative, as enjoyed in contrast with surrounding darkness, he hopes that he shall pass safely and with composure through the regions of terror and tyranny; and, not fearing the wrath of the King, he shall then endure, as seeing Him who is *invisible.*"

On the Monday of the week in which he died, he visited London, on business connected with the school; and by appointment I met him in the city. Here let me be pardoned a personal reminiscence, and for venturing to obtrude my own affairs, in connexion with the account of this last interview I ever had with him on earth. But that interview had so important a bearing on my own subsequent ministerial life, and his words afterwards appeared so prophet-like in their advice and assurance, that I cannot refrain from referring to it; in addition to which, memory delights to linger upon the last moments spent in the society of a beloved friend, whose voice will be heard, and whose form will be seen, no more among the living.

I had sought his counsel, relative to the acceptance of a call I had just received from the church at Kingsland, to the co-pastorate with the Rev. J. Campbell. My own mind was strongly disinclined to accept it; my heart had fixed itself on another people, in a different suburb of the metropolis, where spiritual children had been already given me. But Mr. Clayton's judgment was entirely opposed to my own; and he most vigorously combated all my objections. When I observed that there were, among the 150 people assembling in Kingsland chapel, not a dozen young persons with whom a minister was likely to grow up, and from whom he might look for co-operation—that it was literally an "assembly of elders"—for there were, out of sixty-eight members of the church, twelve about eighty years of age,—he only replied, "Go, and call such young people in." When I said the place was very small, his answer was, "Go, and enlarge it." When I remarked that there was a sparse population among which to work,—Kingsland then was a mere hamlet—cornfields and pasture lands lying between it and London,—he said, "Though the beginnings be small, its latter end will greatly increase." And so, while I was waiting, and desirous to know the will of God in a matter to me of deep and anxious interest, he, in the last words I ever heard him utter—and referring to the success with which his brother George had been honoured in his sphere of labour,—said to me, "Go to Kingsland, and make it a second Walworth."

I was not disobedient to the advice, which the solemn event of three days afterwards seemed to invest with the authority and sacredness of a divine command; and now, on looking back upon the result of the labours of twenty-nine years, in the pastorate which he earnestly and affectionately urged me to accept, I see the wisdom of his counsel, and bless God who gave me so faithful and judicious an adviser.

On Thursday, the 12th of April, he appeared in his usual health, and was full of spirits and activity, as he went about his several duties. After dinner, he invited his daughter—who was frequently his companion in his walks around that pleasant neighbourhood—to accompany him through the grounds of the school. As they strolled along, he conversed cheerfully on a variety of topics; but as though his spirit was unconsciously pluming its wings for its departure, he spoke of the uncertainty of life, and the necessity for making all our arrangements subject to the providential control of God: "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Something incidentally engaging the attention of Miss Clayton, she left him for about two minutes, to examine the object of her curiosity. In this brief interval, a divine messenger had whispered to the man of God—who stood prepared to receive the summons,—"The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as he heard that, he arose quickly, and came to Him." When his daughter returned to where she had left her father, she found him prostrate on the ground. Bewildered, terrified, hoping, fearing,—it was the work of an instant to raise an alarm, and bring the needed assistance to lift up the fallen body. But, alas! the heart that had clung to her so fondly had ceased to beat for ever; its last utterances had been poured into the ears which had from infancy been familiar with its loving tones—tones that shall be heard no more, till parent and child shall greet one another in the Celestial City.

Of course, every effort was made to resuscitate life, but in vain; the arrow had sped direct to its mark. "In the midst of life he was in death." One minute conversing with his companion in the language of earth; the next listening, astonished and entranced, to the language of heaven. Erewhile speaking of Him, "whom having not seen, he loved," then suddenly ushered with breathless awe into His presence,—"beholding His face in righteousness; awaking in His likeness; seeing Him as He is." In a moment the great veil, which hides all things in the spirit-world from mortal vision, was rent, and a limitless horizon stretched out before him.

Wondrous change! Yet, though sudden, should any one deprecate it, who is living habitually, and thoughtfully, on the confines of the two worlds? Mr. William Clayton did so live; and the language of the inspired historian, as supplemented by the apostle Paul, admirably expounds his case: "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. He was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." "And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.'"

This event, in itself so awfully sudden, produced, through a wide circle of relatives and friends, great consternation and grief. The sad intelligence of the chaplain's decease flew rapidly in every direction, and to the most remote parts of the kingdom; as from many of its cities, provincial towns, and country places, some of the pupils had come for education at the Grammar School; and others who had finished 'their studies, had taken up their residence in them. It would not be easy to count the number of those among the young and the aged, the rich and the poor, who participated in the profound sorrow which this unexpected death occasioned, and by whom the name and virtues of William Clayton are embalmed in tender and affectionate remembrance.

When the tidings of the domestic bereavement were conveyed to Gaines, the residence of his venerable father, who had now for two years been a widower, it was feared that they might be productive of some mischievous effects upon his enfeebled frame, and were divulged with the utmost caution. He was in his study alone, when the catastrophe was gradually broken to him. After a vehement paroxysm of parental agony had in some degree subsided, he seemed to collect his thoughts, and in a devotional tone breathed forth a thanksgiving to God. "The Lord be praised," said he, "that dear William is safely landed. The great end of his existence is answered. The object of the anxious solicitude and earnest prayers of his dear mother and myself is realized; he is now and for ever with the Lord!" But again the old man wept, sorrowfully—though not as those without hope; for the "fountains of the great deep are broken up," when the children precede the parent to the grave. It was a mystery, in the arrangements of Him who "giveth not account of any of His matters," that his youngest son should be taken first from the ministerial triad; taken in the very zenith of his usefulness, and from the midst of an occupation so congenial to his nature and disposition, and so likely to be attended with the most important results. But the heart of the aged Christian had learned to school itself to a holy acquiescence, and with devout reverence he listened to the admonition, "Be still, and know that I am God;" meekly replying, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

A post-mortem examination of the body was made, by which it was found that disease of the heart was the cause of death. Mr. Clayton had long entertained the belief that this vital organ was affected; and it produced the conviction to which, shortly before he died, he gave utterance, that his departure would be without any specific warning. This, too, led him, as a devout learner, at the feet of Infinite Wisdom, to "number his days;" and to live in continual preparation for a change of worlds. "How many fall as sudden, not as safe!"

It was deemed appropriate that, without any undue parade, the funeral of a minister who had occupied a post of so much importance and prominence should be a public one; so as to afford an opportunity for the numerous friends, who revered his memory, to testify their regard, by their presence at the solemn services that were appointed to be held, both at Mill Hill and in London. Those at the former place were especially affecting, from the presence of the young people, in whose temporal and eternal welfare Mr. William Clayton had felt so deep an interest. The distance of the residence of the deceased from the place of burial was too great to admit of the attendance of more than the representatives of the school, in the persons of some of the members of the committee, and the principal officers of the establishment; but it was felt to be of the highest moment that an opportunity should be afforded to the whole of that large household, to participate in some of the funeral solemnities. So, before the procession left the house, the coffin was borne into the hall of the school, and all the scholars were gathered together, to pay their last tribute of love and reverence to the dead. Dr. Pye Smith delivered an address to the family and the pupils, full of tender sympathy with them in their respective relationships; and Dr. Morison, of Brompton, a warm friend of the deceased, implored the sanctifying blessing of Heaven to attend this most painful bereavement.

The silence which followed the prayer was then broken by the measured march of the youths who, as they rose from their seats to leave the hall, one by one, approached the coffin, and placed their hands upon it, to take an earthly farewell of one who had watched over them with a paternal interest, and who had now gone to give an account of his stewardship, in relation to them, as well as others. Must there not have been some who, in the presence of death, breathed a sacramental vow of service to the living God? Some who were desirous to be baptized for the dead? who then resolved on unswerving fidelity to the instructions they had received from the lips that were now so silent and cold? "The day will declare it." Nothing would have been more in harmony with the yearning desires of their pastor, than that his departure from among them should be the occasion of spiritual decision to those who remained. Like Paul, he was solicitous that "Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life, or by death;" that they to whom he had so faithfully ministered should "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they should shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that he might rejoice in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." With his whole heart would he have cried, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." "So then death worketh in us, but life in you."

The mournful *cortège* left the school, and proceeded to Bunhill Fields, London, where the interment was to take place. A service was held in the City Road Wesleyan chapel, in the presence of a large and deeply-affected assembly, that had gathered together from various quarters. Dr. Leifchild delivered the funeral oration, and Dr. Burder offered prayer. The coffin was then placed by the side of the mother and sister of the deceased, in the family vault; and for a season he was left to slumber in the midst of many of the excellent of the earth,—men "of whom the world was not worthy,"—who, for conscience sake, had become Nonconformists, and did not shrink from the odium which was attached to the name; whose dust reposes in that honoured necropolis, awaiting the resurrection of the just.*

Some kind hands, moved by loving hearts, strewed flowers on the bier,—on which, at that moment, the snow fell,—as reverently it was laid in its sepulchral abode; for out of the circle of his own family, there were those who had come "to the grave, to weep there," and offer their silent yet expressive tribute of affection to one who was so eminently worthy of honour.

The following Sunday, Dr. Joseph Fletcher, of Stepney, who, with Dr. Burder, had been a fellow-student with Mr. Wm. Clayton, at Hoxton, preached a funeral sermon in the chapel, which for nearly six years had been the scene of his faithful ministration; and then were set before the bereaved congregation, and the pupils of the school, the solemn lessons which the unexpected removal of their pastor was calculated and designed to teach.

A handsome tablet to Mr. Wm. Clayton's memory was placed in the chapel, in the rear of the pulpit, by certain friends, and bears the following inscription:—

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* Surely the unseemly pertinacity of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners,—in their resistance to the offer of the corporation of the city of London, to keep this "God's acre" intact from all secular uses, unless a large sum of money be paid them—will never be persisted in. Religious sentiment and good feeling alike revolt from the huckstering spirit that has been displayed. The graves of Owen, and Bunyan, and Watts,—names of national rather than of denominational renown,—should surely awaken some reverence and regard for the place; and the mercenary spirit, that would make capital out of the ground where such men repose in their last sleep, should be cast out with ignominy.

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. WILLIAM CLAYTON,
CHAPLAIN OF THE
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
AND PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IN THIS VILLAGE;
WHO, IN THE MIDST OF HIS
LABOURS AND HIS USEFULNESS, WAS SUDDENLY REMOVED
TO HIS HEAVENLY REST,
ON THE 15TH OF MARCH, 1838,
IN THE FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

DURING A RESIDENCE OF ONLY SEVEN YEARS,
HE RENDERED ESSENTIAL SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION,
AND TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST,
BY PROMOTING THE ERECTION OF THIS PLACE OF WORSHIP,
AND BY VARIOUS OTHER EFFORTS OF
ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

BY THE DILIGENCE, FIDELITY, AFFECTION, AND ZEAL,
WITH WHICH HE FULFILLED THE DUTIES OF
HIS IMPORTANT OFFICES, HE COMMENDED
HIMSELF TO THE DEVOTED ATTACHMENT OF HIS BELOVED PUPILS,
AND OF HIS BEREAVED FLOCK,
WHO HAVE UNITED IN RAISING THIS TABLET,
TO TESTIFY
THEIR HIGH REGARD FOR HIS CHARACTER, AND THEIR
VENERATION FOR HIS MEMORY.

At the lower part of the tablet the family arms are sculptured, with the motto, "*Nihil sine Deo.*"

It is scarcely necessary much further to eulogize the character of Mr. William Clayton. He would have been the first to deprecate the act; for no man had a more humiliating estimate of poor human nature—and of himself, not the least—than he had. He was conscious of the existence and workings of inbred corruption,—

that awoke the bursting sigh of self-abasement, and led him to cling, with strong tenacity of purpose, to the cross, whence he derived all his hopes of pardon and acceptance. He was a man of unfeigned piety; loving the hour of solitude for communion with his God; having regularly in reading some searching book on experimental religion, as a help to the probing of his own heart. Of the solemnities of that secret intercourse which he so regularly and scrupulously kept up with God, of course no one can speak; and if any one could, his duty is to keep silence. But as the prophet, admitted to a solemn audience with God—of which no other of mortal mould was privileged to be a spectator—silently indicated, in the radiant light that streamed from his face, with whom he had held intercourse, amid the awful grandeurs of the mount, so did Mr. Clayton, when he left his study, after these secret communings with God, in the bright and happy smile that shone on his features,—so expressive of child-like faith, holy serenity, and devout joy,—announce to all who took knowledge of him, that he had been privileged with "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

What he was as a son; what was his "manner of life from his youth, which was at the first among his own people," knew a large circle of observant friends. Tenderly affectionate, yet filially reverent, was he—as were both his brothers and sisters—towards his parents. There was ever, in the intercourse of the younger people with their elders—even to the last days of their lives,—and this was especially conspicuous in the style of address adopted in their letters—more of that old deferential spirit which found its abode in the households of England a century ago, but which is now so rarely met with; when a child would not think of sitting down in the presence of his father or mother without an invitation to that effect; when every word was couched in respectful tones; and when love was found to be perfectly consistent with profound veneration for the parental character. There is something so beautiful in all this, that one cannot but lament the modern innovations, which have banished—though, it is to be hoped, only for a season—this reverential mode of behaviour from our English homes.

Reference has already been made to the fraternal spirit, which was cherished and displayed by the brothers, and which made the interests of one the concern of the rest. In his intercourse with them and his sister, the thorough amiability of Mr. William Clayton ever displayed itself. Happy were those reunions, which from time to time were enjoyed; when from their respective localities they met at the house of one or other of the members of the family; pleasant social converse ever being chastened and sanctified by the introduction of topics of the highest importance, on which every one felt it a pleasure and a privilege to speak.

But it was in his own home, by his own fireside—albeit the circle was small that gathered there—that Mr. William Clayton was seen to perfection. Refinement, culture of mind, kindred sympathies on matters of religion; similarity of tastes in art and science; a love of nature, in all her varying moods and manifestations;—these constituted a strong bond between the husband and father, and the wife and daughter. The latter, as the only child, was not unnaturally soon looked upon more as a companion, than as the youngest member of the household; and to the development of her mind both parents devoted themselves, with all the ardour of their souls; and were blessed in their work. A happier household than that which met under the minister's roof, both at Saffron-Walden and at Mill Hill, could not be found; and the smile that lighted up his countenance, and the glance of affection that beamed in his eye, never shone with so rich a lustre, as when he crossed the threshold of his own dwelling. Dark, therefore, and intense, was the gloom which suddenly overshadowed it, when that light was quenched in the darkness of death.

To Mr. William Clayton's pastoral character there has already been a reference. In the discharge of the duties connected with his office, he was scrupulously conscientious; showing to all equal attention; whether the members of his flock were "the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom," or those who had "this world's good," and were socially in the same position as himself.

In his pulpit preparations he was, as I have already intimated, most assiduous. I have before me, as I write, the last two sermons he preached, four days before he died. Both are written out in full, and an analysis of each discourse accompanies the more expanded manuscript; together with the hymns chosen for both services, endorsed on a fly leaf;—so methodical was he in all he did. One of these, which was the second of the course on Elisha, was entitled, "Children mocking sacred things put under a curse," and founded on 2 Kings ii. 23–25. As among the last teachings of their revered pastor, this discourse would surely be solemnly remembered by his youthful audience. The afternoon sermon was from Proverbs xiv. 14: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways;"

and is a most faithful exposition of the appalling state of the class of persons alluded to, who were held up as beacons, warning others off from the rocks and shoals with which the sea of life abounds. Both subjects, remembered in connexion with the event of the following Thursday, were most instructive.

That he might not derogate at Mill Hill from his well-earned character, as a diligent student, when at Saffron-Walden, he burnt the whole of the sermons he had written at the latter-named place,—more than two thousand in number,—and thus necessitated the composition of fresh ones in his new sphere of labour. There was an amount of moral courage displayed in this transaction that few would have evinced; and a resolution, to work as vigorously as ever, that was unmistakable. It was one of many proofs of a firmness of purpose for which he was remarkable, and from which no love of ease, or temptation to spare himself, could turn him aside.

He was the author of two volumes: *The Invisible Hand*, a tale; and *Submission Exemplified, or the Amiable Stranger;* both of which went into a second edition. They were simple, sober narratives, at an infinite remove from the sensational, both in style and incident. They were written, as their titles imply, for the purpose of solacing the heart of the weary and afflicted with such views of the ways of God as were calculated to inspire confidence in His goodness, and lead the heart to nestle quietly beneath the wing of divine love. These, with the sermon preached before the London Missionary Society, appear to have been the only publications he sent from the press.

Chapter XIX.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON.—1804-1836.

CONTINUED LABOURS AT THE WEIGHHOUSE.—ACCESSION OF GEORGE IV.—RESIDENCE AT GAINES.—ASSISTANCE IN PREACHING.—RETIREMENT FROM THE PASTORATE.—RESOLUTIONS OF THE CHURCH.—HIS OWN EMOTIONS ON RETIRING.—SPLENDID TESTIMONIAL FROM HIS PEOPLE.—INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW MILL HILL GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—INTEREST IN THE LABOURS OF HIS SONS AND HIS SUCCESSOR AT THE WEIGHHOUSE.—LETTER FROM MR. BINNEY.—PREACHES AT WALWORTH.—BAPTISMAL SERVICES.—SECOND LETTER FROM MR. BINNEY.

It is necessary now to return to the elder Mr. Clayton, from whom, at page 170, we had for a while to part, in order to insert the notices which have been given of his three sons. As has been shown, these, with their father, were for many years permitted to labour for God, in their several pastorates; without any interruptions, other than those which are incident to all human occupations, and to which such references as were necessary have already been made. He was allowed to witness the evident tokens of the divine Master's approval with which his children's services were crowned. He rejoiced in their joy; and felt himself, to a great extent, a sharer in all the honours conferred upon them; while, in his own immediate sphere of action, the same blessing accompanied his exertions as had, during the earlier period of his ministry, been so distinguishingly bestowed.

On the accession of George IV., in 1820, to the throne of these kingdoms, Mr. Clayton was chosen to draw up the address, on behalf of the General Body of the Three Denominations. This not unnaturally led him to turn to the records of that body, to see what had been done, sixty years before, when George III. began his reign. Of the 104 ministers, who then went up to the palace with the address, not one remained alive; and the old man was deeply affected as he glanced along the list of the names of departed worthies, many of whom were still occupying their posts when he began his ministry, and with not a few of whom he had, during the space of forty-two years, taken sweet counsel. But now all had fallen asleep. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

Having, about the year 1820, purchased a small estate at Gaines, in Essex, he resolved to build a house there, and make that his country residence. The infirmities of increasing years made it necessary for him to withdraw from the immediate neighbourhood of the busy city, where callers were too numerous, and interruptions too many, to comport with that retirement which he now began to feel he more than ever required. Other arrangements, too, were contemplated, which would facilitate this removal of his household gods.

Among the very few papers left behind by the venerable man, is one, in his own handwriting, referring to this change of residence; and another, expressive of his profound gratitude to God, who had done great things for him, whereof he was glad.

"*August 8th,* 1821.—I and my dear wife entered the house at Great Gaines, Upminster, Essex. This dwelling I had, during its erection, repeatedly given to God; and when prepared as a habitation, it was taken possession of in the name of Jesus Christ, the great Heir of all things, whose merit and grace alone can insure the sanctified use of all He deems fit to bestow on believers.

"When I call to remembrance my small beginnings, and reflect on the stream of divine bounty which has flowed in a current, uninterrupted and increasing, all the days of my life, I ought to be lost in wonder, love, and praise. O, my gracious God, give me a heart to remember thy benefits, with suitable gratitude and devotion!

"*August 20th*, 1821.—It is forty-three years this day since I preached my first sermon at the King's Weighhouse, Eastcheap. How much I have to be humbled for, during the lapse of so much time! I thank thee, O Lord, for thy great forbearance, and for mercies, more than I can number. As a *husband*—I have been favoured by the kind attentions of an affectionate wife, for forty-two years; as a *father*—Thou hast graciously given me children, who are not only performing with promptitude every filial duty, but are abounding in the work of the Lord, and honoured by signal success in preaching the word of life.

"I yesterday received the holy sacrament, for the first time, from the hands of my beloved son, George; with a pious, but little band, in this village. I had great delight (notwithstanding my bodily indisposition) in the services of the day. I sat during worship by the side of my only daughter, for whose good sense, devotion, benevolence, affection, and usefulness I cannot be sufficiently thankful."

It was about this same time that, after forty-three years' service, Mr. Clayton began to feel the necessity for some help in conducting the worship of the sanctuary; and he called his church members together, for the purpose of reading a communication which he had to make upon the subject, and addressed them thus:—

"My highly-esteemed brothers and sisters in the Lord,—You are called together this evening to receive a communication, in due form, on a subject which has been under my serious consideration, for two years past. It relates to an afternoon preacher.

"The necessity for assistance on one part of the Lord's day, has pressed upon me, with more or less weight, for the space of time I have mentioned.

"It was in order, to communicate my mind relative to this business, first, to the officers of the church. It now comes, in regular course, before you; being assembled, in consequence of a public notice given last Lord's day.

"Under some circumstances, a diminution of active service in the church of God may be the consequence of sloth; in others, the demand of duty and submission. On this point, with me there have been great searchings of heart.

"I undertook a pastoral charge, at first, with fear and trembling. The same order of feeling has attended me, more or less, through the lengthened period of my labours amongst you: and I now announce the abridgment of my services, with affectionate reluctance: nevertheless, under a persuasion that the God of nature, who has destined the human body to decay, will not be dishonoured by a timely yielding to His ordination; and that He, as the God of grace, will not allow your improvement to be impeded by my partially receding from public duty.

"As a church, you are now called to exercise a very important right. A voice, in the choice and introduction of a preacher into a pulpit, must be considered as involving your own religious interests, and those of your children, and even of remote posterity. Whether the occupation of the pulpit be for a longer or a shorter time, the results of ministerial influence may be permanently good or evil. The business of this evening will, it is hoped, be entered on, with a suitable dependence on the wisdom and grace of the Great Head of the church.

"I have expressed a wish to our office-bearers, that the assistance to be given us by an afternoon preacher, may not subject the congregation to any additional pecuniary burden. I might, perhaps, without offence, after nearly forty-three years' constant service, prefer some claims as to temporalities; but these I waive; and repeat the request that, in your prospective compensatory arrangements, the preacher's stipend, whoever he may be, may be paid out of the proceeds of subscriptions raised for your pastor; in such proportion, as the sound judgment, equity, and generosity of the deacons may determine.

"Having said thus much, my own feelings, on an occasion like this, together with propriety, dictate the necessity of my retiring, in the present stage of the business of this meeting; requesting one of our brethren to offer a prayer to God before you separate.

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you all. Amen."

In accordance with the wishes thus expressed, arrangements were made to relieve Mr. Clayton of the afternoon service, which continued in force, for a while. But at length the strong men so bowed themselves, and the keepers of the house so trembled, that he felt it necessary to withdraw from his post. He dreaded continuing on in the ministry with failing powers; lest the cause, which was dear to his heart, should suffer—as it most probably would have done—from his utter inability to meet the demands that were made upon his physical and mental energies.

Not a few congregations have declined, in numbers and usefulness, from this very cause; and the humiliating spectacle has presented itself of men, enfeebled in all their faculties, attempting tasks which required a herculean strength for their right performance. The wise and timely introduction of more youthful powers might have averted the downward tendency of affairs, in some congregations; and the infusion of fresh blood have awakened new life and vigour, throughout the whole ecclesiastical body. It is not difficult to understand why those venerable and venerated brethren thus cling to their position. Some are the last to perceive that they are shorn of their strength; and cannot discern, what is very patent to others, that the eye *is* dim and the natural force abated. Others look round upon their home circle, and cannot always discover whence the help is to come, for the loved ones there, when the usual source of supply is closed to them. If on the one hand they think they hear, in the house of God, a voice which tells them their stewardship in the church should come to a close, they hear another in their own dwelling—the voice of imperious necessities—when, perhaps, wife and children are waiting to be fed, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

It will not do for others to be oblivious of these facts, however strong their convictions may be of the absolute propriety of abdicating a position, the functions of which cannot be duly discharged.*

Happily, Mr. Clayton was not in circumstances which made it necessary to pause, on these grounds. God had given him a competency; and he thankfully accepted it, as from the divine hand: and not the least was he grateful for this, in that it gave him the opportunity of withdrawing from a post which he could not, with satisfaction to himself, nor with the usual amount of edification to his people, fill.

He resolved, therefore, to retire from his pastorate; and leave the way clear for the introduction of another minister, whose hands should be more strong to labour than his, which had for so many years been put to the plough, and which were now becoming feeble and faint. He was desirous of seeing another standard-bearer appointed, to receive from him that banner which he had so nobly, and faithfully, and fearlessly borne, before that portion of the army of the living God, accustomed to look so confidently up to him for direction, and valorous inspiration, in the holy warfare in which they were engaged; and who knew that, whoever might be recreant or laggard, that would be waved in the forefront of the conflict, in whatever direction the tide of battle rolled.

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* The author cannot forbear the expression of his thankfulness, that this difficulty, so frequently and poignantly felt, is likely to be met, to a great extent, by the establishment of the "Pastors' Retiring Fund," of which the Rev. Dr. Ferguson is the able secretary. He commends it warmly to the sympathy and aid of all the churches of the Congregational order, from a personal observation of the exceedingly happy results that have already flowed from its beneficent operations.

The resolve was made known to the church in the following communication, which was thus prefaced:—

"Mr. Clayton does not feel that he has sufficient firmness, personally to address the church, to-morrow evening, and requests Mr. Watson to read the underwritten communication.

"Dear Brethren,—In the year 1778, having, by a signal concurrence of providences, been called to minister in holy things in this place, I have continued to teach and to preach to you, and your predecessors, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to the present period. For this grace given to me, who am less than the least of all saints, I give thanks to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the God of my salvation.

"The influence of time on the body, which is destined to decay and dissolution, has rendered me less capable of active labour. My growing infirmities, together with your disappointment, hitherto, in not obtaining a suitable afternoon preacher (with other reasons, which need not be mentioned), induce me to believe, that my retirement from office, at the Weighhouse, will facilitate your obtainment of an eligible successor. My reason for thus judging is, that a minister whom God has endowed with gifts and grace, adapted to raise and keep together a London congregation, will not be inclined to accept an invitation to anything less than the station of a sole pastor.

"Wishing to see you (in my lifetime, should it please God) happily settled, in unity and love, in a promising church state, whenever the desired gift of a competent teacher is brought to your approving notice, I shall readily, by a finished resignation, surrender to you the awful and responsible right of choosing, for yourselves and posterity, a minister who may go in and out before you and your dear children; diligently caring for the flock, over which the Holy Ghost may make him the overseer.

"This communication is respectfully made, from the concern I cherish for your present and future religious prosperity; not to urge you to adopt any hasty proceedings. As my retreat from professional duty is by no means intended to be uncourteously abrupt; so your measures will be marked by Christian deliberation; yet not lukewarm, or dilatory.

"The wise and gracious guidance of the Great Head of the church, which you have sought, and will continue to seek, I trust will, at no very distant day, put you in possession of a pastor, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

"This, my dear brethren, be assured, is the sincere and earnest prayer of—your faithful and affectionate pastor,

"John Clayton.

"Gaines, Upminster, 22*nd of February*, 1826."

This letter was, as requested, read to the members, assembled for the purpose of hearing this communication from their pastor; and the emotions with which it was received, may be easily gathered from the resolutions which were then presented for adoption.

"*February* 22*nd*, 1826.

"At a church-meeting held this evening, at the Weighhouse, it was unanimously

"Resolved, *First*:—

"That the members of this Christian society desire humbly to record their unfeigned gratitude to Almighty God, for having, in His wise and merciful providence, directed and appointed, in the year 1778, the Rev. John Clayton to the superintendence of the church and congregation worshipping in this place; for having preserved his valuable life, and for having bestowed upon him such general bodily health, as that, to the great comfort of his attached flock, he has seldom been prevented from discharging his ministerial and pastoral duties, through a period of more than forty-seven years. And especially do they desire to express their devout thankfulness to the Great Head of the church, for having built up His people in their most holy faith, by the edifying labours of their beloved and venerable pastor; and for having made him the honoured instrument of turning many sinners from the error of their ways, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

"Resolved, *Secondly*:—

"That a large proportion of the members of this church, having long enjoyed the advantages connected with, and resulting from, the pulpit exercises and pastoral duties of their esteemed minister, and all of them feeling a most ardent and filial affection for his person, they receive the communication, made by him this evening,—that he is desirous of relinquishing the endeared connexion which has so long subsisted between them,—with deep regret; but, sorrowful as they all feel, in looking forward to the entire secession of their minister and friend from his public labours, they desire to bless their heavenly Father, as the God of peace, for the reciprocal friendship and affection which have hitherto subsisted between the pastor and his people; ever to remain, they trust, unabated and undiminished. That the members of this church and congregation can never forget the faithful, wise, and affectionate counsels given from the pulpit, in this place, by their minister; nor his occasional friendly and pastoral visits to their respective families; and as they believe that the fervent prayers, offered by him, publicly and privately, for their temporal and spiritual welfare, have been, in many instances, mercifully heard and answered, so they trust they shall still ever be remembered by him, in his supplications at the throne of the heavenly grace.

"Resolved, *Thirdly*:—

"That it is a satisfaction to the members of this society, that the painful feelings, induced by anticipated separation, are mitigated by the assurance given to them, that their beloved pastor will continue his accustomed services, until the church is provided with a suitable successor. That they do cordially and unanimously embrace this opportunity of expressing their sincerely affectionate regard for their minister, and their veneration of his uniformly consistent character; and also beg to assure him that they will not cease to pray that a copious effusion of the enriching, sanctifying, and consoling influences of the Holy Spirit may ever be poured upon him, by the Great Head of the church; that the evening of his life may be attended with a holy peace, and a serenity of mind which passeth all understanding.

"Resolved, *Fourthly*:—

"That it now becomes the duty of the members of this church, collectively and individually, by earnest prayer, to beseech God, the Fountain of wisdom, to direct them in the choice of an able, diligent, affectionate, and faithful man of God, to preside over them in the Lord, as the successor of their beloved pastor.

"Resolved, *Fifthly*:—

"That a committee be now appointed (aided, as it is trusted they will be, by the counsel and prayers of the church), for the especial purpose of making the inquiries requisite for obtaining a suitable minister; one who is richly endowed with spiritual gifts, distinguished by his piety and humility, and also by his zeal and love for the cause of the Redeemer's kingdom, generally; and for the prosperity of the church and congregation in this place, in particular; and that the following members constitute the said committee, viz.:—Messrs.

"Dyson, Burkill, Roberts, Turner,
"Tomkins, Brown, Hanson, Cooke,
"Watson, Procter, Wood, Curling,
"Dawson, Piper, Sutcliffe, Mills.

"Resolved, *Sixthly*:—

"That the letter received from the Rev. J. Clayton, which has been read this evening to the church, be entered in the church book, together with the foregoing resolutions; and that the officers of the church be desired to wait upon the highly-esteemed and venerable pastor of this Christian society, with a copy of these resolutions."

A few days afterwards, Mr. Clayton, in a letter to his son George, gave expression to some of the emotions with which he contemplated the step he had taken, and which, to superficial observers, might have appeared one in which feeling had no place—so calmly had he gone through the act of resignation. But his was not a nature to reveal to every passer by, or even to every friend, the secrets of his heart. To his son, however, he could venture to open its inner chambers, and permit him to read the inscriptions there.

He writes from Devonshire Square, under date February 27th, 1826:—

"My dear George,—I thank you for the copy of a very excellent charge, delivered at a late ordination, in the Poultry chapel. I value much your filial love, conveyed in expressions far exceeding my parental claims.

"It contributes to my satisfaction, that you think I have done right, in the solemn transaction of last week. You favoured us with your prayers, whilst the business was in progress; we need and request the continuance of your supplications, that a comfortable settlement may be granted to the church.

"What I have done has been sanctioned by my judgment; but my softer passions are not under that control I could wish. The tender recollections, furnished by the interesting events which have taken place, during my pastoral connexion with the church at the Weighhouse, affect me, when alone, unduly. May a gracious God pity, and also forgive, the infirmity of my excitement! for sin is blended with all I think, feel, and do.

"It has been my anxious labour, for half a century, to collect, not ornamental, but useful materials, for ministerial work. My efforts have been too official in one respect; my own vineyard has not been sufficiently kept. I shall, however, if spared, have an opportunity of remedying the defect; but the opportunity alone is not sufficient, without a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

"I ought to be truly thankful to my gracious Master—who has been pleased to retain me in His service for so many years—that I do not retire from my station and connexion with my people, in consequence of mutual weariness of each other, nor with apathy; for the affectionate resolutions, passed at the church-meeting, last Thursday, are of a character that I cannot read without emotions almost overwhelming. May the day of your separation from your beloved flock be distant! When it does, as it certainly will, take place, may the closing scene be attended with the like Christian feeling, for which I and my people have to thank a gracious God.

"We hope to see you in the country, next week.

"Give my love to my daughters, who are, your excellent wife, and obedient daughter.

"I am, as ever, dear George, your affectionate father,

"JOHN CLAYTON."

During that year the Rev. Edward Parsons was introduced to the congregation at the Weighhouse, as a suitable successor to Mr. Clayton, on his retirement; and after preaching for some time he was invited to the pastorate. This invitation was accepted, and Mr. Clayton himself introduced the newly-elected minister to his charge, preaching from the words, Psalm cxviii. 19: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity."

It was natural that, on the occasion of his withdrawment from office, the people who had for so long a period enjoyed his faithful ministrations, should desire to present him with some permanent token of their love and gratitude, to which he himself, and his children after him, might look, with honest pride, and pardonable exultation; as proofs of the appreciation of the labours of nearly half a century. A committee was formed, and plate, of the value of £228, was purchased, and on January 1st, 1827, presented to Mr. Clayton, at a crowded public meeting, held in the edifice which had been for so many years the scene of his public labours. It was the wish of the congregation, and particularly of the young people, who had ever participated in the affectionate veneration cherished for their late minister, to witness the ceremony; and therefore, although it would have been more congenial with his own feelings to have received it privately, Mr. Clayton consented to gratify the prevailing desire.

In *The Times* newspaper of January 2nd, 1827, there was a lengthened account of the presentation; from which the following description of the plate, and an epitome of the addresses delivered on the occasion, are given.

"The plate consists of a vase, and two salvers. The vase is of silver, richly gilt, in dead and burnished gold, 21 inches high, and weighs 223 ounces. The cover is surmounted with the acanthus leaf, upon which stand the three characteristic virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity. Beneath is a wreath of palm leaves, and at the edge, a bold border of flowers and scrolls; the body is occupied, on one side, by a bas-relief copy from Raphael's cartoon of Paul preaching at Athens; and on the reverse is the following inscription:—

"'To the Rev. John Clayton, who, for forty-eight years, sustained, with distinguished acceptance, fidelity, and usefulness, the interesting and responsible office of pastor of the church and congregation, assembling for divine worship at the Weigh-house meeting, Little Eastcheap, this tribute of affectionate regard was, on his retirement, presented by the people of his charge, in testimony of their love for his person, of their veneration for his character, and of their gratitude for the many advantages,—intellectual, moral, and spiritual,—which, by his instrumentality, were conferred upon them, by the Great Head of the church.—1826.'

"Above these is a rich border of laurel leaves and berries. On the lower part is again introduced the acanthus, enriched with flowers, from the top of which rise the handles, in an elegant and serpentine form. The lower part of the vase is ornamented with leaves, flowers, and a wreath of laurel.

"Each waiter is 17½ inches in diameter, and weighs 97 ounces. It is supported on rich shell feet. The bottom is chased, and in the centre is an inscription corresponding with that on the vase.

"The right hon. the lord mayor (alderman Brown), an old and respected member of the church, became the representative and organ of the donors of this splendid gift.

"The chair was taken by R. Dawson, Esq., one of the deacons, who, after a hymn had been sung, and prayer offered by the Rev. Edward Parsons, stated the object of the meeting. He reminded the assembly, that on this day was completed the laudable object, for which they had met on the 27th of May, when they determined to present some appropriate token of gratitude and affection to their late valued minister. The chairman acknowledged that, at the public recognition of his successor, some months before, he experienced a considerable mixture of joy and regret; but on this day his feelings were of the most pleasurable kind; and after happily expatiating on the obligation under which the church and congregation were laid to Mr. Clayton, he directed their minds to that God who had qualified him for his work, had smiled upon his labours, and crowned them with His blessing.

"The lord mayor then rose, and said:—

"'Rev. and dear sir,—The committee have confided to me the presentation of these memorials of gratitude and esteem. I am sensible that it might have been considered desirable, that this should have been made by some gentleman connected, by office, with the church and congregation, over which you have, for so many years, presided. Still, I will not affect to conceal my pleasure, that I have been selected to perform this duty. Not among the least of the reasons for the pleasure I feel, is the persuasion, that the gift will not be the less acceptable for coming through the hands of one towards whom, I have good ground for belief, from many instances, not merely of official attention, but of personal kindness, you entertain a warm and sincere affection.'

"He proceeded to state, that the church and congregation there assembling for the public worship of Almighty God, had felt that their late pastor,—after forty-eight years' continuance among them; after having, during all that period, faithfully discharged every pastoral duty—was justly entitled to a lasting memorial of their gratitude; that nothing need be said to justify the proceedings of that day, to those before whom he stood, because an advocate for their propriety was to be found in the feelings of every one who heard him. He spoke most feelingly, when he said, that parents who were present were conscious they owed not only their own conversion, but that of their children, under God, to their late pastor. He knew that he spoke the sentiments of many present, who, by their parents, now with God, had been presented to the rev. gentleman whom he addressed, in order to their being by him dedicated to God, in holy baptism. He remarked, that if it were permitted to the spirits of the just made perfect to know what was passing in our world, many a member of the church triumphant, with whom the minister before him had, in days that were past, taken sweet counsel, would join in approving of what was then passing, in that portion of the church militant; that while the feelings of the assembly were interested in the business on which they were met, their judgment was in full accordance with their feelings; and that he hoped, and was fully persuaded, that He who graciously condescended to approve of the conduct of one who, in the days of His flesh, poured upon his Sacred Person the alabaster box of ointment, would deign to approve of the testimony of affection which they were about paying to one of His faithful ministers.

"He said that he felt the more satisfaction in what was passing, because he believed most firmly, that while it was the desire of that people to obey the injunction of the apostle, 'to know them who labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake;' it was their earnest wish to adopt the full spirit of that sentiment which was inscribed upon the plate,—to regard their late minister as the instrument whereby many spiritual blessings had been conveyed to them, but to give to God the glory of all the good that had been achieved.

"In alluding to the three sons of Mr. Clayton, and to his successor (all of whom were present), the speaker expressed his persuasion, that the scene which they were witnessing would tend to strengthen their hands, and encourage their spirits, in the warfare which they were leading against Satan and his kingdom. In reference to his own situation, as chief magistrate of the city,—in the very heart of which, for so long a period, Mr. Clayton had faithfully, perseveringly, and unhesitatingly, amidst evil report and good report, declared the whole counsel of God,—his lordship took occasion to speak of his obligations to a kind providence, for having, by its merciful dispensations, introduced him to a connexion which had been to him the source of great domestic happiness, and the means of leading him to that place, wherein, upon true Christian principles, he had been faithfully taught his duty to his God, his neighbour, and himself; and ascribed whatever either of private or public usefulness he might have been enabled, amidst much cause for self-humiliation, to exemplify, to the blessing of God upon those instructions. He exhorted the young, if they would live honourably and usefully, and die safely and happily, to attach themselves to a practical evangelical ministry; to take the Word of God for their rule; and to make conscience of prayer for the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to give effect to the means of His own appointment.

"On presenting the plate, he expressed his own wish, and his full persuasion that he gave utterance to the desires of every individual present, that the rev. gentleman might pass the autumn of his life serene and happy—that his usefulness might be protracted—that at a very distant day he might come to his grave, in a full age, like as a shock of corn fully ripe in its season—that then he might be introduced by many whom he had survived, but to whom his labours had been blessed, into the immediate presence of that Saviour, whom he had long and faithfully held up to sinners—that by Him he might be welcomed with a 'Well done, good and faithful servant'—and that he might, at the great day of final account, and consummation of all things, appear before his Master and his Judge, accompanied, if it were the will of Heaven, by every individual to whom his message had been addressed.

"The Rev. John Clayton said, he could not forget that at the age of twenty-three he entered this famed city, with his staff, and undertook the pastoral charge of this church and congregation; and now, after having laboured for nearly half a century, he was called, on retiring from his station, to receive unlooked-for honours. The presentation by the chief magistrate he considered as adding value to the gift. 'I am not,' said he, 'elated, but humbled by your commendation of my pastoral fidelity. I have a very humble view of the manner in which I have discharged my duties, compared with that of many of my brethren.' He ascribed the presentation of this metallic gift to their sense of the value of the delightful truths of the Gospel, which he trusted were inscribed, not on gold or silver, but on the tablets of their hearts. He believed those principles would be found influential on the chief magistrate, who, he hoped, would not prove a pliant osier, but an oak. He expatiated on the liberal spirit of Gospel truth. Some, he said, had regarded Protestant Dissenters as bigots in principle, and anti-social in conduct. He repelled the insinuation, and felt thankful that he had frequently associated with the clergy of the Establishment, and exhorted his young successor to cherish a friendly regard to the ministers of the endowed church. 'All,' said he, 'who are illuminated by the Spirit of God, are illuminated by the same Spirit. There is an identity of principle in the heart, and the fruit will be the same.'

"The circumstances of that day he regarded as encouraging to ministers. He exhorted his successor and the people to fear God, to love the brotherhood, and to honour the king. He paid a tribute to the church and congregation, for this act of their kindness and munificence; and for all former instances, in which their kindness had been as a refreshing stream. He entreated that they would add to their gift their fervent prayers on his behalf.

"After a short pause, the Rev. John Clayton, jun., rose, and spoke to the following effect:—

"'Mr. Chairman,—Being totally unacquainted with the order of this service, may I request your permission (if I shall not disturb your arrangements) to say a few words on this highly-interesting occasion. For as I have been gazing at the surrounding scenery, and musing upon the things which I have heard, I have felt the fire kindling within me, and I can hardly refrain from speaking with my tongue. Interesting, sir, such an engagement must be to the late pastor of this church and congregation, while he is called to accept so valuable an expression of the uncooled affection of a people, among whom he has laboured, for a period of nearly *fifty* years, with so much acceptance and success. Interesting it must be to the religious community, from which my beloved father has recently retired; while they have the satisfaction to perceive that the separation which has taken place, has not been effected amidst the storm of strife and angry debate, nor in the sullen and ominous calm of secret alienation of heart, but amidst the quickening breezes of devotion, and in the mild atmosphere of Christian love. Interesting it must be to the present highly-valued minister of this place, while he is furnished with so conspicuous a proof of the reciprocal affection of the former pastor and his flock; and sees, in this splendid gift, a pledge that, not only in the fire and enthusiasm of his youth, but in his sober autumn, and even in the December of his life, he is likely to be surrounded by those who will continue, in unabated friendship, to cheer him by their assurances of attachment, by their prayers, and by their beneficent ministrations. Interesting, more especially, is this solemnity, to those of us who form part of the family of the preceding speaker. It takes us back in thought to the earliest parts of our history, and to the scenes of our childhood and youth; it reminds us of the period when we were first brought to this temple, and consecrated, in baptism, to God; of the season when we assembled with the worshippers, and began to lisp the name of Jesus, and to call upon "Our Father, who is in heaven;" and of that golden hour when, bending before the cross of the Saviour, we surrendered ourselves to Him, and to His service for ever.

"'Surrounding friends will surely forgive us, if at such a meeting as this, and amidst such recollections as these, we drop a tear or two; and charitable allowance will be made, if the speaker discovers more weakness and embarrassment than his endeared brothers, who sit by his side. This assembly, I say, will pardon us if, for once, we publicly offer our grateful acknowledgments to our honoured father, who has often charged us, within these walls, to "Remember our Creator in the days of our youth;" and to our venerable mother, who, as we were grouped around her, frequently bedewed our heads with the tears of her devotion, and who travailed anew, that Christ might be formed in our hearts, the hope of glory. We have not the "cup and platter" of gold and silver to offer, but we present the devout gratitude of affectionate filial hearts. Gratitude, sir, may be compared to a fountain, which divides itself into several streams. If there be one which flows towards our parents, there is another which rolls in quick and strong current towards you, and the members of the religious society in the midst of which we stand.

"'We will not employ words of compliment and adulation. We sincerely thank you for all your past kindnesses, and your present memorial of unbroken regard. We feel ourselves in the situation of the younger of the three sons, who were bidden by an Eastern lady to furnish her with an expression of their love, before she went a long journey. One brought a marble tablet, with the inscription of her name; another presented her with a rich garland of fragrant flowers; and the third entered her presence, and thus accosted her: "Mother, I have neither marble tablet, nor fragrant nosegay, but I have a heart. Here your name is engraven; here your memory is precious: and this heart, full of affection, will follow you wherever you travel, and remain with you wherever you repose."

"'Allow me only to add, sir, that I cannot but consider this service as a very expressive type of that which shall take place in future, both in this world and that which is to come. The hour fast approaches, when we shall be successively separated from each other, at the tomb; in the darksome chambers of which our bodies shall slumber, till the consummation of all things shall arrive. But when the fair morning of the resurrection shall dawn, and the dispersed children of God shall be collected together, all, who have been participants of the Spirit and grace of Christ, shall meet again, in a temple so spacious as to contain a multitude which no man can number; when the endearing reciprocities of a perfect charity shall suffer no interruption; where a eucharistic festival shall be celebrated, at which there will be no need of the chalices of silver and gold; and where the devout and delighted assembly shall never be dissolved.' "

Thus ended the connexion, so long and so faithfully maintained by pastor and people; and Mr. Clayton retired to the solitude of his country residence at Gaines, to prepare for another separation, of a more momentous character than even this. In the society of his beloved and honoured wife, and in the near neighbourhood of his most estimable daughter; surrounded by his books in his own library, or reading the wider pages of nature, in the heavens and earth, his life glided peacefully on towards its close; calm as a summer evening—and, like that, flushing with a golden sunset, in the accumulated honours and affections with which his last days were crowned.

On the occasion of the opening of the new buildings, erected at Mill Hill Grammar School, in June, 1827, Mr. Clayton, from his high position in the Congregational body, his known sympathy with the educational movements of Dissenters, and from his venerable years, was selected to give the inaugural address. How would his interest in the event have been increased, had he foreseen that that was to be the scene of his youngest son's latest pulpit labours, and of his lamented and early death!

Although withdrawn from the active duties of his ministerial office, and freed from the incumbent obligations inseparable from the pastoral relationship, he did not cease to feel interested in the honour and usefulness of the church of God, and especially of those portions of it presided over by his sons. This is evident from a letter, written on the occasion of the anticipated exercise of some stern church discipline, by one of them.

"UPMINSTER, *January* 30, 1828.

"MY DEAR ——,—The present crisis of your ecclesiastical affairs at ——, has with weight rested on my mind, ever since I read the letter addressed to your sister. My anxiety has risen, in part, from a fear that you may be discouraged and enfeebled, in the discharge of your pastoral duty, by the unholy boldness of any opposing power, human or infernal.

"You, as a minister of Christ, stand upon high and solid ground, where the express directions of your great Master have placed you; consequently, your duties are not optional but defined, and imposed by the supreme will of Him, to whom you hereafter must give an account of your ministerial labours. If you, and the officers and members of the church, keep to written instructions, with a spirit of prayer, you may be assured of the presence of Christ. Matt. xviii. 15–20 inclusive, contains a law of the kingdom, intelligible, and of easy application. You have nothing to do with the use Satan and human corruption may make of a religious profession, and Gospel discipline in *action*. The King of truth will be answerable for all the consequences of your duty, whilst performed in His Spirit, and depending on His blessing.

"The church is a kingdom not of this world. What do you mean to touch in your prospective measures? Not the civil rank, liberty, or property of any man; but to deal with departures from the explicit laws of that King whom God has set in Zion; departures, not of an equivocal character, but established by tangible facts.

"Do not, my beloved ——, think that any strange thing has now happened to you and your charge. Meet the trying dispensation in the exercise of grace, and it will turn your present administration into an honourable, instructive, holy, and convincing testimony, which will silence adversaries; yea, convince and convert sinners, and most certainly edify the faithful.

"I like much your spirit of holy and charitable sorrow for the delinquent. You are in the temper of the supreme Pastor, who says, 'I hate putting away.' In the present instance, there is a call for the most poignant grief, because the previous deliberate and temperate measures have produced wrath rather than penitence. This state of mind forebodes heavy chastisements in this world, or the pains of hell for ever. The last consideration to you must be almost overwhelming, after so many years of intercourse on sacred ground, and in often-repeated acts of sacramental commemoration of the dying love of Him who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.

"Church discipline is disliked by unsound professors. Do not be surprised if, in a church so numerous, there should be found some individuals who would approve a *sermon* on Christian zeal, but cavil at an *act* of zeal. Lengthened observation has grounded me in the conviction that, in some circumstances, the most morbid characters will find partisans, who will endeavour, by well-worded declamations, to draw away even true disciples after them. 'Stand fast, quit you like men, be strong.' Read Rom. xvi. 17–19.

"I have penned the above, not because you want information, but that you may know that your father, although retired from public scenes of action, retains his public spirit; and that he entertains a prayerful solicitude for the prosperity of the church of Christ, and for the honour and success of all her ministers; especially for his beloved sons, whose Christian deportment and ministerial diligence, favoured by proofs of divine approbation, are occasions of much satisfaction to both their aged parents, and demand from them abounding thanksgiving to God. To His guidance and blessing you are commended. With tender affection to your dear ones, from your mother and myself,—

"I am, dear ——, your loving father,

"JNO. CLAYTON."

In the welfare of the cause with which he had been so long identified, he took the liveliest interest, even to the last. When, therefore, the church at the Weigh-house invited the Rev. Thomas Binney, then of Newport, in the Isle of Wight, to be their pastor, he rejoiced with great joy; and in July, 1829, offered the designation prayer on the occasion of the new minister's introduction to his charge.

It is with much pleasure I introduce the following letter from Mr. Binney, as illustrative of the veneration with which Mr. Clayton was regarded by one who entered into his labours,—and was therefore capable of forming a judgment of the ministerial and personal estimation in which he ought to be held—one who has occupied, and still happily occupies, a far more prominent and influential position in the church of Christ than was ever allotted to the venerable subject of these memoirs. *Esto perpetua.*

This letter contains a reference to Mr. Clayton's expressed opinion—not unimportant or insignificant—on some of Mr. Binney's publications—especially as, in one of them, the "*Celebrated Sentence*" occurred, which has entailed more unjust obloquy on its author, and more ungenerous animadversions on him and his convictions, than were ever uttered or penned by the fiercest polemics of a past generation. It is not a little curious to see how current events are every day writing confirmatory proofs of the correctness of the sentiment, embodied in his memorable words; which, though demonstratively shown to be the offspring of others, not of Mr. Binney's communion, was quoted against him as if it had been indebted to him alone for existence.

"13, FINSBURY SQUARE, *October* 31*st*, 1832.

"DEAR SIR,—I should be quite ashamed to acknowledge your very kind and gratifying communication, so many days after receiving it, were it not that I know you must be so well acquainted with the incessant occupations of a London life, as to be able to make every allowance for one who is in the midst of the heat and burden of that day, the hallowed and calm evening of which has so softly descended upon yourself. I well knew, my dear sir, your continued interest in the church and congregation at the Weighhouse, and felt persuaded that in your daily intercessions for them, your successor in the pastoral office was not forgotten; still, it is pleasing to be assured of the fact, and to receive from yourself those kind and indulgent expressions of your regard which your letter contains.

"Your sympathy, both in my sorrow and my joy, is acceptable and gratifying. The stroke with which we were visited, in the removal of our sister, was indeed distressing, both from its severity and its suddenness; it has been followed, however, by such transcendent mercy as demands our deepest gratitude. Not only was Mrs. Binney sustained in the hour of peril, and made the rejoicing mother of a living child, but both have continued ever since perfectly well, and are affording me the prospect of their continued health.

"The satisfaction that you express with my publications affords me, I assure you, no ordinary pleasure. My *last*, especially, I expect to be spoken against by the bigoted and selfish of all parties; and it is gratifying to find men of age, experience, and wisdom, encouraging one's efforts to bring people together, on the principle of mutual love and mutual forbearance, rather than to feed and foster party pride. We all want reform, in the highest sense; we want more of the Spirit of Christ, and less of the spirit of the world. There is far too much secularity both in our ministry and our churches. We want the fire of another Whitfield to melt the frozen, and to animate the sluggish. God's Spirit is withheld from us, because we are too much taken up in quarrelling with each other, and too little intent on the conversion of souls, and the glory of Christ.

"Begging to be remembered continually in your prayers, and with kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Clayton, in which Mrs. Binney cordially joins,

"I remain, dear sir,
"Very much and respectfully yours,
"T. BINNEY."

In July, 1834, Mr. Clayton officiated at York Street chapel, in Walworth, on the occasion of the absence of his son George, and in a letter addressed to him, thus refers to the service:—

"I have complied with the united request of the pastor and officers of York Street chapel, to take the morning service. Indeed the request was conveyed in terms so earnest and affectionate, that I could not decline, what I, nevertheless, undertook with fear and trembling. My text was Heb. xii. 6. I was graciously assisted, beyond my expectations, and very, very far beyond my deservings; for I am prone to forget not only the word of exhortation, but the word of promise also.

"The attention of the auditory gave me reason to believe that they heard a voice, now much impaired by time. The whole scene at your chapel affected me much; not only at the time I was there, but on the retrospect of my visit. Your officers are men of mature age, grave, and adorned with the graces and proprieties of their Christian office. You have, I am persuaded, their willing co-operation in all your endeavours to promote the cause of our blessed Saviour. The large assembly of immortal beings filled me with awe. Has my son (I thought within myself) this multitude to address every Lord's day, and a great majority of an impressible age, not yet hardened by a corrupting intercourse with an evil world? What a large prize has your great Lord put into your hand,—to impart wisdom to souls who, in the space of thirty or forty years, will be in a state of everlasting happiness or endless torments!

"May large supplies of the Spirit of Jesus Christ continue your strength for useful labour; and sustain, in unbroken exercise, your patience, of which you have great need. You have hitherto been well supported, for which many thanksgivings to God are offered by your relatives and others; and there are promises to be inherited which contain more than at present we can conceive; for at best 'we see through a glass, darkly.'

"We had a great press of Weighhouse people at the chapel, and many in the vestries. Alderman Brown took me in his carriage to Manor Place, after the services. So much kindness was too much for me to bear with firmness, and the pictures in the parlour completed my overthrow. A flood of tears relieved me."

At times Mr. Clayton preached to the people at Upminster, with whom he statedly worshipped; and other congregations now and then enjoyed his services. Ever were these welcomed. It seemed as if one of the old prophets had returned to bear testimony for God, when the noble-looking old man ascended the pulpit, and, with a blending of great dignity and solemnity, delivered his message to the people. In the baptism of some of the children of those he had baptized years before, he was found not unfrequently engaged. As has been intimated, this was ever a favourite service with him; and those who witnessed it, as performed by him in his old age, will never forget the thrill of emotion with which they beheld it.

The following letter from Mr. Binney was written with a vivid remembrance of one of these scenes. Mr. Clayton had sent four Bibles to Mr. Binney's four sons, the youngest of whom he had recently baptized, and this was the acknowledgment:—

"KENNINGTON COMMON, *December* 13*th*, 1839.

"DEAR SIR,—I can hardly express to you, in words, the feelings with which Mrs. Binney and myself received your present for our sons, and read your letter to ourselves. We have always looked back to the day when you dedicated our dear child to God, with deep interest. It can never be forgotten by us; and we trust the day may come when that child, taught to realize the fact, shall feel as if 'aged Simeon' had 'taken him up in his arms and blessed him,' and, impressed by the moral influence of such a recollection, learn earnestly to seek the fulfilment of the prayers which were so fervently offered for him then. Such a result, we cannot but believe, will be greatly aided by the manner in which you have now expressed your feelings of interest in the child. Not only for him, indeed, but on all, do we trust, that the possession of the Holy Scriptures, as a gift from you, will 'avail much.' Taught, as they will be, to venerate your character, as an aged minister of the Lord, and having in their hands what was felt by such an one to be the most valuable thing on earth, after a sojourn in it nearly approaching to a hundred years—this, under God, may greatly contribute to attach them to its truths, and lead them to seek its consolations for themselves.

"I am much affected by the kind manner in which you speak of myself, personally, and of the interest you feel in my engagements, as your successor in the church. I often painfully acknowledge, to myself and to God, the utter incompetency of which I am conscious, for the duties that daily devolve upon me. I highly value the prayers with which I know you remember me, and solicit, dear sir, their constant and earnest presentation on my behalf. I ought to mention, that the elder children are exceedingly pleased with their books, and think that 'it was so very kind in Mr. Clayton to remember them.' Mrs. Binney unites with me in thanking you for the good wishes you offer for ourselves and our children, and in prayer to God, that you may continue to enjoy, in an abundant measure, the supports and hopes of that Gospel which you so long dispensed. I much regret that extraordinary engagements this week have quite prevented my writing till to-day.—I am, dear sir, your obliged friend, and (I may add) son, and successor, in the Gospel,

"T. BINNEY."

Chapter XX.

MRS. CLAYTON.

HER GENTLE RULE.—EDUCATION OF HER DAUGHTERS.—LETTERS TO GEORGE CLAYTON.—INTEREST IN HER HUSBAND'S LABOURS.—LETTERS TO MR. AND MRS. JOHN CLAYTON.—ILLNESSES AND FEAR OF DEATH.—LETTER FROM HER SON.—ANECDOTE OF MR. JAY, OF BATH.—HER LAST HOURS AND HAPPY DEPARTURE.—MRS. JOHNSON'S "REMINISCENCES OF HER MOTHER."—LETTER FROM REV. J. SORTAIN.

THE calm current of Mr. Clayton's domestic life was, however, destined now to be ruffled, by an event which, though not unexpected, came upon the old man with terrible violence. God was about to take from him "the desire of his eyes with a stroke." But before I describe that occurrence, it is most fitting that the principal portion of this chapter should be devoted to a more detailed account of the excellencies of character possessed by the venerable lady, to whom frequent references have already been made, in connexion with some of the leading events in her husband's or children's lives.

A happier choice, neither the man nor the minister could have made, than that which, under divine guidance, Mr. Clayton was led to make, when he chose Miss Mary Flower, as the partner of his joys and cares. Intimations and proofs have already been given of her matronly dignity, and wisdom, and tenderness. She reigned as queen in her home, but it was a sceptre of love that she swayed; she governed her domestics, but it was with a happy blending of kindness, firmness, and self-respect; she held all her children in the bonds of subjection, but the cords were silken, and pleasant, and never chafed; while to her husband she was ever attentive, affectionate, and sympathizing; never forgetting that he was a minister of the sanctuary, and a bishop in the church of God, to whose hands was committed a trust that would often necessitate self-denial on her part, as well as his; and cause to devolve upon her additional and heavy obligations, in the home management of her children.

Faithfully did she discharge the varied duties of her household; and most lovingly was she reverenced in consequence. There was a playfulness about her that was a pleasant relief to the more Roman stateliness of her husband; and one can easily conceive how welcome this would be to the young people, whose natural hilarity would find, in this peculiar feature of their mother's character, that which harmonized most with their own moods of mind. Yet Mrs. Clayton could be as grave and dignified as her husband, when occasion required; and her children ever found, on all questions of morals or religion, a tone of decision was assumed, and a look of thoughtful seriousness worn, that bespoke a consciousness of the entrance upon a class of subjects, which could only be contemplated in one aspect, and that a most solemn one.

She took great delight in the superintendence of the education of her daughters; watching, tenderly and anxiously, over the budding and unfolding of their minds. She was ever tremulously alive to the importance of a true moral development, which she knew greatly depended upon the kind and mode of instruction given to young people, as well as upon the examples that were continually before them. So that it was with the greatest anxiety she made arrangements for their education; and regretted much when, through any failure of health, which was very frequent, her usual attention to her daughters' studies was interrupted. That her heart always yearned for a return to this congenial occupation, and that she was keenly alive to the responsibility and importance attaching to her superintendence, is evident from one of her letters to her son George.

"My beloved and necessary business I cannot yet enter upon —the instruction of the dear girls, especially Jane, who needs me much, unless others more qualified could and would attend to her. O how I dread your sisters entering upon the world, superficial, half-educated, *idle-headed*, and *idle-handed* young women! I am sure I do not belie the truth, when I say that, in the professing world,—I mean the dissenting world, which I am in,—there are many set in battle array against solid, mental, religious, and moral improvement. Therefore, though I am only a poor wounded warrior, I must fight upon stumps for your sisters."

Another extract from a letter on the same subject, written by Mrs. Clayton to her sister, Mrs. Dawson, who was then residing at Lancaster, will not be unacceptable, as showing the possession of that "good common sense" of which she writes.

"We have gone through the five volumes of Saurin's *Sermons*, with much pleasure, and I hope profit; and we have now entered on Dr. Horne's *Sermons*, with great delight. Jane occasionally—daily if we can—reads poetry to me. She is now going through Milton, the second time.

"As for accomplishments, I can give them none, for I possess none; but I wish to give them ideas, to communicate knowledge, to form a sound judgment of man and things. I am anxious that they may partake of that good common sense, which shall pervade everything in the whole circle of action, during their lives, wherever they are destined to move. I have endeavoured to form in them tempers Christian, amiable, and benevolent. It would be flattering to me to have them *shine;* but my prayer is, 'Let them be good and do good; lessen the stock of human misery, and add to the stock of happiness.' Then I have the assurance that they shall be blessed in their generation."

As her sons grew up, and entered upon their Master's work, she displayed great interest, not only in their personal but ministerial welfare. Her letters to them evince a keen insight into human motives, a pretty close observation of the world, and a sagacity that often served to indicate the course which those she loved should pursue, when they themselves were hesitating or halting.

When George was settled at Southampton, she wrote the following letter to him, in relation to the offer of a tutorship to some young gentleman, the son of an influential member of the congregation to which her son ministered, and which is referred to, on page 227.

"Need you, my dear George, determine respecting your tutorship, till we come? I think, when your good father is on the spot, his wisdom could decide. Do not finally fix: time, and a little prayerful waiting, generally give true light. I can only say, 'May our good God make every path of duty straight, and plain before your face.' You should well consider the characters of your people, who advise for, or against. Their motives, their views of your holiness, as a minister, were I acquainted with them, would greatly influence me to side with them, or differ from them. Those who think you do not visit enough,—what do they want you to visit for? to sink your mind, talents, and religion? or to raise themselves, and keep you up to the rare and very difficult duty of spiritual, rational, well-improved hours? I confess, could the plan be fixed, which could insure time for pulpit preparation and closet prayer, at stated seasons, I should, without hesitation, try, for one twelvemonth. That minister gains much, whose employments are all rational; never debased by a thousand things, which custom and a low standard of religion, worldly propriety, and affected politeness, among the richer low people now give a sanction to; but how different the estimate of Scripture, reason, learning, and sound good sense! Beside, you have not a baby to educate, but a youth; to form him to religion and good morals—which, by God's blessing, I hope you would do. History, poetry, philosophy, moral and natural, would fill up great part of your time; and happy and very useful are those ministers who can, by a spiritual art, work up all for the sanctuary. God is a God of wisdom, as well as grace. I want you to have much of these things, and bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh to your blessed Saviour. I wish it may ever be said of your labours, that, after you have worshipped Him in prayer, you, like those sages, open your *treasures*."

While thankful to find that her sons were labouring with acceptance, and that substantial tokens of kindness and regard were not wanting, she was most anxious for their spiritual usefulness. On the occasion of a present of some plate to her eldest son, about the time of his marriage, she wrote thus:—

"If my warmest wishes can avail, I say, 'O that they may be emblematical of the richness, duration, lustre and light of his ministry in that place!' for, separate from this, I should feel no pleasure. Could you have riches, honour, and all the bounties of divine providence, bestowed upon you, except it was all, all consecrated to Christ and His temple, the wishes of a fond mother—poured out from the time my infant sons were laid on their first pillows, to this period—would all be frustrated. I aspired high for you; asked the durable riches of eternity, where moth and rust do not corrupt; and prayed that in your sacred employments to adorn the temple of God, you might bring and polish lively stones, and place them as pillars in the heavenly Jerusalem, where they shall eternally shine to the honour of the dear Redeemer. Whatever you possess, in providence and grace, may it all be devoted to this blessed cause; for 'worthy is the Lamb to receive riches, as well as honour and glory.'"

Most judicious and motherly, and at the same time far seeing, were the counsels she gave, when, after her son George's mind had been troubled to know what course he ought to pursue, in a perplexed condition of his affairs, she penned the following letter. The admirable advice, too, which she gives to him, in connexion with his ministerial preparation and duties, is beyond all praise.

"HIGHBURY PLACE, *September 20th*, 1803.

"MY DEAR GEORGE,—We were truly glad that a calm had succeeded the storm; and that agitation and conflicting passions had given place to tranquillity and resignation of mind. I think God has strongly marked out your present duty, to pray and wait. His voice is, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' It is our highest interest and sweetest rest to be found submissive at His feet. I pray God to continue this state of mind. Remember a state of suspense is the present ordination of God, to exercise you in the highest duties and graces of the Christian; to lead away from all self-dependence, from all second causes and means; and to bring you to repose your cares on that omnipotent power, love, and goodness, which alone can make crooked things straight, and rough places plain; whose sole prerogative it is to create peace; to cause light to arise out of darkness, and order out of confusion; and to make all perplexities 'work together for good to them that love God.'

"Make daily use, therefore, of the gracious command and high privilege to cast all your care upon God, who careth for you. Be not sinfully careful, even in this affair; but by 'prayer and supplication make known your request unto God, and His peace shall keep your heart and mind.' May His gracious promise be fulfilled to you!

"The admirable Charnock has this beautiful remark: 'The springs of God's providence often run underground out of sight; but ere long they will arise with new medicinal qualities, contracted from the earth through which they ran.'

"It is a good plan to read what is suited to the present state of the mind. I have found Flavel on *Providence*, and

Charnock on the same, frequently, in my seasons of trial, balm to my hurt mind. I earnestly recommend these treatises to your perusal, and to your memory; and many things contained in them to your place-book. Now is the season to gather this fruit, and to preserve it rich and fine; for yourself, your future family, and the church of God. My heart has suffered much, lest your ministerial character should, in the least, be injured, by this perplexed affair; but I have poured out my soul to the Lord, daily, to prevent it. God grant that you may be enabled to give yourself to reading, meditation, and prayer.

"Now, my dear George, is your seedtime; and if much is not sown in youth, there will not be the rich and golden harvest in future life. You are a labourer; your time is the Lord's; and the work of the ministry should occupy him who has entered upon it, as much as the counting-house, the shop, the wharf, or the exchange, does the merchant and the tradesman. To change my metaphor, ever remember good Bishop Hall, speaking of ministers, says, 'They should always be fishing, or mending their nets.' I may add, if their nets were not of so flimsy a texture, and so dreadfully broken, as in too many instances they are, more fish would be caught; for the inseparable connexion of means and ends is God's predestination, to accomplish His purposes of grace to a fallen world.

"I have been, and am still, a sincere mourner of wasted time, in many ministers. That talent of talents! O give yourself *wholly* to your sacred work, that your profiting may, through a long course of years, appear to all! You live in days of peculiar temptation, especially as to the sacred hours of the closet and the study; and yet however popular, however cheerful and jocular in the parlour, many of this description are (and the uncoloured fact is, many such there are in this day—I must say it, nor am I censorious in saying it)—they cannot have any scriptural claims to be holy men of God, such as the written Word describes. We cannot make a false estimate when we take Acts xx., and St. Paul's epistles and commands to Timothy and Titus, for our guidance. I was much pleased that you read, and so much admire, the life of the holy Philip Henry—a good model for you. Read it again and again. Your sisters tell you all the news, while I write my heart. Believe it, my dear George, to be that of the most affectionate of mothers.

"MARY CLAYTON."

Her connexion with some of the institutions at the Weighhouse has been already noticed, and the excellencies of the pastor's wife were—if not quite so conspicuous as those of the mother of his children—noticeable, and most praiseworthy. Until afflicted with the deafness, which incapacitated her from uniting much with the committees, who managed the several societies connected with the chapel, she was ever ready, so far as her home duties would allow, to take her place with other admirable workers, and to share their labours and responsibilities. The subjoined letter, written to her daughter Mary, will show her deep interest in the subject of education, and the heartiness with which she joined in all her husband's plans for the benefit of the poor:—

"Good Mary Henwood has left the almshouse, for a mansion prepared by love divine, in the New Jerusalem. She was eighty years of age, and had been a member of the Weighhouse forty years. Papa preached a beautiful sermon for her, yesterday. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' Rich or poor, may our lot be with the saints! He is no proper judge of blessedness who hesitates a moment to prefer the condition of a penitent in the porch, to that of a sinner on the throne.

"O what a thrice happy day I had last Tuesday! In the upper school-room were assembled nearly three hundred people, the flower of the Weighhouse congregation. When all the visitors were seated, the children came in, one by one, in slow order; girls first, then boys, with the master and mistress. Papa began by singing the forty-first psalm, and then prayed. A very charming address followed;—first to the benefactors, S. M——, Esq., who gave the ground, and Mr. T——, who gave £300. Other liberal donations were mentioned; the circumstances enlarged on and improved; and the gracious goodness of God celebrated. Reference was made to the fact that some children, brought up there, were now excellent servants, others flourishing tradesmen; and that some had died in the faith. One girl, who was patronized by a lady present, had departed this life, an eminent believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Papa then addressed the children, and the master and mistress. Then the scholars repeated Scripture and hymns; and a poem to their benefactors, simple and pretty, written for the occasion. All was concluded with prayer.

"Dear M. M——, all activity, stood by a large table, ready to distribute the rewards—articles of clothing, &c., &c. O how pleased the poor children were! When the shawls were noticed by some of the ladies, I believe they were as highly gratified as a duchess would have been, in displaying the various elegances of a drawing-room at a grand rout. The company then went downstairs, and in the boys' school-room two long tables were spread, with a small one for the master and mistress, and abundant provision for all.

"Several dear friends were there, and presented their offering. But none could have my feelings. I hope I did wonder, love, and adore, when I remembered that the boys' school originated in the desire of a poor female of little note. When it was mentioned to papa, he said, with a grave countenance, 'He was sure the Weighhouse congregation could not support two schools.' I replied, 'Let us try twelve boys.' We selected them; and our pious servant, Robert Beale, who was incapable of labour, from shortness of breath, became the master. We took a room, paid him half-a-guinea a week, and it flourished; but he was soon called to glory. His prayers, I doubt not, were precious seed which has sprung up. I well remember making them shirts at Highbury; and when they were clothed and came thither, to have tea and cake, what joy it gave me to see them walk in the garden. They were noticed at worship; inquiry was made; subscriptions came in; and now twenty-one boys are educated, annually clothed, and have a dinner on the Sabbath; and,—a grand conclusion—one thousand pounds have been raised for the spacious building.

"Thou art, O Lord, a God who doest wonders. Thou hast not despised the day of small things. What has God wrought! In this instance he has done exceedingly abundant more than I could ask or think. O praise the Lord for His goodness!"

When unable to do much abroad, she was ever keenly alive to her domestic obligations. Nothing relating to her husband or her children was a matter of indifference to her. She seized all opportunities to prove that she was an observant wife and mother, and was ready with help or counsel, as the case might require. On the first anniversary of her eldest son's wedding-day, she sent this greeting:—

"MY VERY DEAR CHILDREN,—Though Mary will answer dear Sarah's letter, respecting our sweet invalid, I must send you a line, to wish you many happy returns of this day. How many minds mingle when bodies are separated! Had the feelings of my heart been gratified, I certainly should have visited you this day; but in this, as in many other instances, I am the child of necessity, not of choice; or in other words, I must not have my own will, but am called very frequently to give it up. O for blessed resignation to calm my soul; to teach me to say, 'Father, thy will be done.'

"I am continually pressing after cheerful submission to the divine appointment; and sometimes hope I shall in patience possess my soul, and attain to the 'ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price;' and the finest adorning of the female character. I believe I have been with you as much in spirit, all this morning, as if I had actually been sitting in your parlour; and have with genuine affection poured out my heart for you, before the throne of mercy.

"On a review of your first year of marriage, in retracing the various providences of God, we must sing of mercy and judgment. Many have been your trials; but what deliverances! what signal instances of favour! what providential supplies! So marked, that the divine and beneficent hand has been most conspicuous, and has put unbelief to the blush, and hushed our guilty fears. Let us then say, 'Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever.'

"My wish for you, my beloved children, is, that you may walk in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless, like the holy couple set before us in Scripture example. 'Walk together as heirs of the grace of life,' that your prayers may not be hindered. Live in that love you have begun. Beware of the least diminution. 'Be of one heart, and one mind; and the God of love and peace be with you.'

"I have had many thoughts respecting the situation at Kensington; and in looking back, and seeing what has been done, it must, beyond a doubt, appear that it was a chaos. Has not some order arisen from the rough, rude, heterogeneous mass? Who can tell but light, life, and fruitfulness may, in God's due time, through His all-gracious, all-powerful influence, be given. His work is gradual, in the new creation. Let much prayer be made, for God to prosper His word to those ends to which He has appointed it.

"Papa unites in all kind wishes, at this period, with your truly affectionate mother,

"MARY CLAYTON.

"HIGHBURY PLACE, *May* 12*th*, 1804."

The subjoined letter was written to Mrs. John Clayton, when the latter had entered upon her interesting maternal duties with her young and rising family; and shows both the submission of the writer's heart, under her heavy affliction, and her supreme concern for the spiritual welfare of those who were dear to her.

"HIGHBURY PLACE, *December* 12*th*, 1810.

"Amid the multitude of undeserved mercies, which a gracious God, of His free bounty, has bestowed on me, I account my dear children a very prime one. Their attention, prayers, and true sympathy, demand my gratitude, and devout acknowledgment to Him, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. This leads me to return my dear daughter my heartfelt thanks, for every expression of her love and kindness, by messages, and especially by her affectionate letter, received by Mr. Clayton, on Sabbath day. Could I have *heard* your soothing, condoling, and encouraging language, how glad should I have been of a visit, in my affliction, from my dear Sarah; but the distracting noise in my head, my not hearing my own voice, with other pains, and total deafness, have made me covet stillness and retirement, as the only means of quiet; and,—should it please the all-disposing Providence—a little partial recovery.

"I have reason to bless God that I am rather better; and hope Dr. S——'s prescriptions have been of some benefit. I am going on with them. I know you will join me in praying, if it be the divine will, that they may be still more efficacious in the recovery of my health; and, what is yet more to be desired, in a renewal of animal spirits; for sure the worst part of my disorder has been extreme dejection, which, I believe, is the quintessence of nervous malady. Oh, how does this spread a gloom over everything, earthly and heavenly! What an avenue for the grand enemy of souls to enter, and act with his cruel devices. Yet I have reason to praise God, for Satan has not prevailed. My confidence in the dear Lord Jesus has been unshaken. I have cast anchor on the sure and immovable promises of God; and though in storms, and clouds, and tempest, have not, I trust, lost sight of the skilful Pilot, who can bring me safe into the port of rest and joy.

"I hope you and your dear tribe are well. May the divine benediction rest upon them, and on all your care and labour of love towards them. I should tell a falsehood if I said I pitied you. No! those cares are delightful; especially those you are now entering upon, or, rather, have entered upon. It is no poetic fiction to say, 'Delightful task, to rear the infant mind.' I know the truth as much as mortal can; and look back and view those hours, so spent, as my period of bliss. Ah! pleasant task, to draw out the infant reason; to teach the young to think; nor to rest till you have improved the mind, as well as stored the memory; to see the dear little ones take in and digest their knowledge; and grow up with strong, vigorous souls—making a true and scriptural estimate of persons and things around them. Above all, oh, bliss divine! to lead them to Jesus, who has promised to take the lambs in His arms, and fold them to His bosom! May this, my dear daughter, be your happy experience; and then I may add, for my dear second progeny, 'Not a grandmother's fondest wishes, can to greater joys aspire.'

"I once hoped, in this employ, I should have the honour to be a coadjutor with you. But I am still a babe—a learner in the great lesson of resignation. Yet though I lisp, I desire from my heart to say, 'Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done.'

"Was my dear Mr. Clayton at home he would send his love. The child of my heart, my matchless Mary, desires her affectionate regards to you and 'John, the beloved;' in which cordially joins your very affectionate mother,

"MARY CLAYTON.

"Excuse all defects; the last page is written in the dark."

As her sons one by one settled in life, she was left with only her daughter Mary for her female companion, and most tender and loving was the intercourse between them—more like that of sisters, with some slight disparity of years, than of mother and child. Mrs. Clayton's affliction and growing infirmities rendered it necessary that she should be cared for, with untiring assiduity. This care was never intermitted; for even when Miss Clayton, in 1816, was married to Mr. Janson, and subsequently contracted a second marriage with Mr. Johnson, her home being situated near her mother's, she was still able to perform her filial duties, or at least so to superintend those who ministered to the venerable lady's wants, as that nothing was neglected that was necessary for her comfort.

A more amiable and excellent woman than Mrs. Johnson never existed. In the above letter, her mother calls her her "matchless Mary;" and, making all due allowances for maternal preferences, there was really a solid foundation for so high an estimate of her daughter. But she was one of the timid and trembling class of Christians. John Bunyan's Mercy, at the wicket gate, admirably represents her—for while others were "rejoicing in Christ Jesus," she "did stand without, trembling and crying, for fear that she was rejected, and that no gate should be opened to her." While every one recognized the unmistakable evidences of a true spiritual vitality in her profession, her constant fear was that she had "a name to live and was dead." Through her whole life she went mourning, under the apprehension that she had no interest in the Saviour; and, to the last, dared only, and as it were in *secret*, touch the hem of His garment; with the hope, though generally a faint one, that she *might* be made whole. She never doubted the *power* of the Divine Healer, but could not realize the fact of His willingness to restore her; and this arose from the profoundly humble estimate she had formed of herself, in the presence of Infinite Perfection. I have no doubt that this intensely morbid sensibility, that was most distressing to those who loved her, and revered her for her numerous excellencies —excellencies which were patent both to rich and poor, who shared either in her bounty or friendship,—resulted from physical causes, whose subtle operations could not be traced, but whose effects, too plainly visible, were painful in the extreme.

Mrs. Clayton was often the subject of severe and dangerous affliction. More than once, especially between the years 1811 and 1813, all hope of her restoration to health was abandoned; and her husband and children were hourly anticipating the loss of one of the best of wives and mothers. But these trying seasons, that tested her faith and patience to the utmost, served only the more vividly to elicit the graces of a meek and submissive spirit, which, amid the tempests that were sweeping around her, could exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" and God came nigh in the hour of peril, to rescue her; so that she was spared to a good old age, to adorn her station with those Christian and matronly graces which so dignify and beautify "a mother in Israel."

Another letter to her son George, dated Upminster, December 6th, 1823, must close the extracts given from her correspondence. It will be seen that, towards the conclusion of it, she refers to what was a marked feature in her religious experience, her dread of the hour of death; through fear of which she was "all her lifetime subject to bondage."

"I hail you, my beloved son, that your great and good Master does not turn you out of work, but keeps you in the best employment; gives the highest wages, and the sure promise of a rich inheritance, when you cease from your labour. Who can tell the blessedness, when He shall not only enrich, but approve? Oh! the felicity to hear, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Bliss beyond the conception of mortals!

"Pray take care of your health. The body is His servant, and yours; therefore do all you can to keep it strong for service, and unimpaired. Much as I long for and love your company, I gladly relinquish the pleasure, for His sake who pleased not himself; nor must mother or sister interrupt His service. It grieves me much to hear of my dear daughter's pains and suffering. I take her affliction where I take my own—to the throne of mercy—to Jesus, whose infinite love bore our sins and sicknesses, and carried all our sorrows. Give my love to her, and assure her of my heartfelt sympathy—made peculiarly so, at this time, as a partner in pain, though somewhat abated.

"I thank you for the precious little book. I have perused it with pleasure, and I hope profit. It is wise, scriptural, and holy; I wish it may spread, and be adopted by the heads of families; especially that God may be glorified, and the pious zeal of the author reap his reward.

"Good Mr. Curling's death must be called a translation; so peaceful! Such a well-founded confidence in his Redeemer may well banish, or at least mitigate, the dread of the last enemy. I hope, in this illness, my fear and bondage have a little subsided; at least I have endeavoured to maintain the combat against unbelief, fear, and despondency. In the prospect of death, in former sickness, this was my state—lingering on the brink, I feared to launch away. Now I have laboured to glance beyond Jordan; to enter more into the employment and enjoyment of the heavenly state. I have been greatly aided in my meditations by the admirable Saurin; especially by two of his discourses, Revelation v. 11, 12, and 1 John iii. 2, where he shows the blessedness of the beatified soul to consist in four communications from the adorable Saviour: 1st, A communication of ideas—all rectified from sin, darkness, and error; 2nd, A communication of love; 3rd, Of holiness; 4th, Of felicity. His enlargement on these charmed me. Indeed I have chiefly read Saurin, of late. His sublime devotion, original thought, strong reasoning, just conclusions, and eloquence of style, have been a means of fixing my attention, and diverting and drawing off my mind from my painful bodily feelings.—Believe me to be, your loving mother,

"MARY CLAYTON."

To this prevailing fear of death her son George refers, in a letter he addressed to her in 1829, in which he mentions, for her encouragement, a case not unlike her own, that had a happy termination; and adverts also to one of God's afflicted children, whose accumulated woes might well awaken in the hearts of others a tender sympathy, excite gratitude for freedom from such trials of faith, and lead to the magnifying of that grace, which sustained the trembling and troubled spirit, and bore it safely through terrible "storms and seas of deep distress." Mr. George Clayton says:—

"It has long been the earnest desire of my heart, that you may be favoured with a larger measure of spiritual peace and sensible consolation; but though this is to a certain degree denied you, and though you walk in darkness, and have no light, yet it is your happiness to trust in the Lord, and stay yourself upon your God. I can believe for you, though you may not be able to take the comfort of it yourself, 'that at *evening* time, it shall be *light*.' Have you seen Mr. J. Brandam's funeral sermon for the late Alderman Lea? His experience, for many years, was like your own; but at last the sun of divine consolation broke forth in all its splendour, before he entered that bright world, where it shall go down no more, for ever.

"It was just so with a dear old lady, whose removal I endeavoured to improve last Sabbath—Mrs. Webb, of Fetter Lane—the daughter-in-law of the minister who once preached there. My text was, 'Cast down, but not destroyed;' which might be truly said to be her motto, as descriptive of her outward afflictions, and inward depressions. Her youngest daughter was, by accident, burnt to death; her eldest son, by a fall, fractured his skull, and was killed, at twenty-five years of age; her husband died in the midst of his days, of a decline; and she remained a widow forty-three years. After this she lost her eldest daughter, who died—in consequence of family troubles—of a broken heart, at fifty years of age; and to complete the sad picture, on a principle of mistaken generosity, she sacrificed her property to some other children, and lived, for twenty-five years, in a state of poverty and dependence. Yet was she a gentlewoman, by birth, manners, and education; and a bright ornament to her Christian profession, in humility, integrity, meekness, and submission, for sixty-six years. One of the long 'cloud of witnesses.'"

This fear of death was as much, if not more, a dread of the actual struggle with the last enemy, than of the consequences. How she should pass through the river?—that was her anxiety. Whenever she met with Christian ministers, or persons of marked piety, and lengthened experience in the divine life, she invariably introduced the subject, hoping to hear, from some of them, words, whereby she might be saved from the continuance of the torturing apprehensions which possessed her.

One day, before her deafness became quite confirmed, she was in the society of Mr. Jay, of Bath, and, as usual, her favourite topic was introduced. She spoke to her visitor of her fears; and of her sorrow because she knew those fears were derogatory, both to her profession, and to the lovingkindness of her Lord.

"Madam," said Mr. Jay, "why do you persist in making boats, and carrying them on your head?"

"Carrying boats on my head!" replied the lady, rather perplexed, for a moment, to discover his meaning; "I don't understand you."

"Why, madam," rejoined Mr. Jay, gravely, "you are, I know, about to cross a river—it may be dark and deep—it may, I believe it will, be shallow, and bright with Heaven's splendour. But you seem to think that the Lord of the country whither you are going, when He summons His friends to come and abide with Him, does not properly provide for their necessities,—by having some mode of transit ready for His guests, when they come to the water that flows between His country and ours; and so you think it needful to carry a boat along with you."

Mrs. Clayton looked earnestly at the speaker, and, as though a new light had flashed in upon her soul, said, "Ah, my dear friend, you have fairly described the state of the case. Like the disciples on the sea, when the Saviour was asleep, I have been very fearful. Well may the blessed One—who now never slumbers nor sleeps, but who has said, 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, He shall preserve thy soul; the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore'—chide me with the loving rebuke, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'"

There are many who can sympathize with Mrs. Clayton, in her mental trouble, who need only call to remembrance the "exceeding great and precious promises" which have been given on this subject. Surely He, who bears with His people through all the wilderness, will never leave nor forsake them, when they come to the Jordan! He who has divided the Red sea, and enabled His ransomed ones to pass safely, from the Egypt of the world unto the mount of God, will certainly care for them in crossing the narrow stream! If, in the greater and more lengthened conflict with the prince of the power of the air, we have stood still, and seen "the salvation of the Lord;" in that which we must wage with death —his enfeebled and oft-defeated offspring—we shall certainly not be less encouraged, by the presence and power of our great Deliverer! "We shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us." With Satan bruised under our feet, we shall, undoubtedly, one day exultingly exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"All things are yours; whether life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Mrs. Clayton's last hours were a remarkable commentary on the truth of this assurance.

She had reached the advanced period of ninety years; and having been often the subject of severe bodily suffering, at times extending over many months, it is no marvel that the tabernacle should be very feeble, when such extreme old age was attained. At this time any intercourse with her, by means of speech, was utterly impossible; her deafness having become hopelessly incurable. Every communication had to be made by writing; and although her family and domestics patiently sought by this slow method to converse with her, yet, from the very necessity of the case, it was scanty information that could be conveyed. She was therefore left much to her own resources, and her time was principally passed in reading or meditation.

She, of course, was able to make known her wishes and thoughts to her family, for the faculty of speech was enjoyed, though that of hearing was lost; and sweet and welcome were the communications that came from her experienced and cultivated mind. Her counsels were most precious; for they were recommended by the forcible example of a lengthened and holy life. The Christian meekness, and humility which clothed her as with a garment, falling in graceful folds around her, had an irresistible charm; while the loving tenderness, undiminished by the lapse of years, that gleamed in her looks, and trembled in her tones, won the reverential affection of all her social circles. She was often visited by her children and her grandchildren, who, as they sat at her feet, felt how awful, and at the same time how beautiful, goodness was; and that it never shines with a richer lustre than when it reveals itself in old age. If ever profound veneration is felt for another; if at any time one feels inclined to render a kind of worship to the creature that may deprecate censure, it is when one is in the presence of an aged disciple like Mrs. Clayton; who, while yet a sojourner on earth, seems as if living in the atmosphere of heaven.

No one who had been in her society ever failed to feel interested in her; and often her solitude was cheered by the presence of Christian visitors, who delighted to hear, from her lips, her varied reminiscences of three quarters of a century back. Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, was one of her friends; and he sent a message to her, through her son, which was amongst the very last communications she received from the outer world, a short time before her death. "He inquired much about the state of your mind," wrote Mr. George Clayton, on the sheet, with which he communicated with his mother. "I said, I thought you dwelt in the atmosphere of contrition. He said, 'I wish I could talk with her, for that is my prevailing frame of mind; in dust and ashes before the cross of Christ.' He added, 'I should covet to live and die with the two Marys. To live with the first, sitting at the Saviour's feet; and to die with the second, bathing those feet with tears.'"

But at length "the time drew nigh that she must die;" and it was granted to her that her experience should afford another illustration of the tender and loving care of God over His people; that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."

For some days increasing difficulty of breathing had been noticed by Mrs. Johnson, and the attendant; and, at their earnest solicitation, she consented, though very reluctantly, to adopt a rather sharp remedy, in the shape of a blister. The night that followed was a very restless one, but she arose the next morning, as usual, and readily partook of the food that was brought to her. During the day she several times fell into a quiet doze, as she sat in her easy chair; watched by the loving eyes that could see the shadow beginning to fall, which was to end in the total eclipse of the light, that had for so many years gleamed on that beloved face.

When the hour for her evening devotions arrived, she asked for her Bible and hymn-book, that she might read her portion; but the eyes failed to perform their functions, and she laid down the books gently, with a sigh, that seemed to whisper a consciousness that the duties of "those that look out of the windows" were well-nigh ended. She then crossed her hands meekly, and her lips breathed some words of prayer, which, at intervals, became audible to those around her. "Blessed Jesus," she said, "cleanse me in thy blood; O cleanse from every sin! Make me like thyself —holy. Prepare me for thy presence." These were among her last words.

Shortly after, she feebly attempted to rise, and walk towards the bed,—her daughter and her attendant supporting each arm. "How is this?" she exclaimed, suddenly; as, leaning heavily upon them, she turned from one to the other, with a look of wonder in her eyes. They placed her gently on the bed; and she laid her head lightly on the pillow; then lifting up a loving glance towards the face of her daughter, whose filial attentions had, for so many years, been most solacing to the beloved invalid, she gave her a sweet expressive smile. That was the last farewell between the mother and the child,—for the next moment she was in heaven. Not a quivering of the lip was seen, not the faintest sigh even was heard; the solemn stillness of that moment was unbroken, till the sobbing of the bereaved ones told that all was over. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'" "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth."

Thus she who, "all her lifetime," had anticipated this solemn hour with dread, found that the valley was full of light, and the pathway smooth and clear. She did not see death; she knew nothing of the anticipated conflict with the last enemy. She was a conqueror without a struggle. As silently and softly as the flower folds its petals, at the evening time, so did her eyelids gently close, as the night shadows fell around her; and she sank into calm and dreamless slumber. "So He giveth His beloved sleep." Her blessed Lord had fulfilled His promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." With this peaceful scene before us, do we not say, "So come to us, Lord Jesus"?

Mrs. Johnson, after her mother's death, gratified her own filial affection, and complied with the wishes of many friends, by writing the following

"REMINISCENCES OF A BELOVED MOTHER.

"To gather up a few favourite sentiments of hers, and endeavour, however feebly, to delineate some permanent characteristics, cannot violate her wish that no eulogy should be attempted; a wish which will ever be held sacred by those who so tenderly loved her, and in whose hearts her precious memory is embalmed.

"Being the eldest in a large family of children, her time was fully occupied in domestic duties; which, she was wont to say, would always be the honour and glory of females, while the last chapter of the book of Proverbs was held canonical; for no indolent, selfish, or ignorant person, could ever consider, plan, and execute, as did the 'virtuous woman.' She did not, as many, after her long day of exertion, boast of her efforts, and be ill-humoured with all about her; for in her tongue was the law of kindness. She used to say the duty of women was, in Paul's epistle to Timothy, said to be the 'guidance' of the house; but too many read the passage, 'Drive the house;' therefore there was so much misery in the kitchen. Guiding implies calmness and judgment, not petulance and exaction.

"She had a secluded room, in her father's country house at Tooting, where she devoted her hours to study, and working for the poor. As the younger part of her father's family grew up, she had much more time for reading, which she highly prized, and diligently improved, by the perusal of the best authors. Among the poets with whom she was conversant were Homer, Milton, and Young. In her after days, Cowper was her constant companion; and she committed much of his poetry to memory. All the old divines were perused, and transcribed from; and many volumes of diary were written, all of which were burnt, before she went to heaven.

"This life eminently fitted her for the position she was called afterwards to occupy, and so eminently to adorn. When she married, she was a sweet solace to her husband, and a great help to him, as a minister; ever ready, in animated and highly intellectual converse, to blend her mind with his; while all that was tender and domestic engaged her affections and efforts.

"Her three sons were formed in the nursery. She had an earnest wish that her eldest son should be a minister; and she has told us that, the night he was born, she was constantly repeating the lines,

'May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Love and serve Him all thy days;
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise.'

She committed him to her God and Saviour, as surely as Hannah did the infant Samuel.

"Very early did she wish her children to recognize the sacredness of the Lord's day, and to love it. She obliged us to put away all our toys at six, on Saturday afternoon. She found pleasing and entertaining books, suited to our age; and used to narrate to us the historical parts of Scripture, in her own language, and we were to guess the names of the persons. Every Sabbath evening she was accustomed to gather us around her, taking the youngest on her lap, and ask us very close questions, about our thoughts and feelings; and pray with us, in most simple, tender language. Perhaps the very first convictions of sin in the heart, and the desire to have it pardoned and subdued, may be dated from these seasons of maternal watchfulness and love.

"She used to wish young people to be taught to think. She said that in education the memory was tasked, and there were masters for every branch of learning; but she never heard of a *thinking* master.

"As we grew older, proverbs and select sentences were gathered during the week, and we each read them, on the Sabbath evening. Then Scripture characters were illustrated; then my dear brothers took a text, and wrote upon it. This was the beginning of their studies, in composition and sermon-making, in which God has made them so eminently useful, through their whole lives.

"She loved to be the companion of her sons and daughters, and to get their confidence as well as affection. When it became twilight, before the candles were brought, she delighted to amuse and instruct us, and to call our mental faculties into exercise. She went through the various tribes of bird, beast, fish, plants, and trees; asking each child, in turn, what was its favourite, and why he or she liked that best; and when we had selected ours, some for form, or beauty of plumage, or fine singing, &c., she would tell us which was her choice, and give substantial reasons for valuing it; bringing out useful qualities, or gentle manners; and thus leading us to estimate most highly what benefited or delighted society, rather than what merely attracted the eye, by the showy and extrinsic.

"She was anxious, at the very earliest period, to subdue the will, but on no account to break the spirit. She said the duties, cares, and trials of future life would call for all the cheerfulness and buoyancy that any young one possessed; and therefore it was wise to keep the spirit as firm and unbroken as possible; but to induce, as soon as could be, the self-denial, self-relinquishment, meekness, and gentleness, which the religion of Jesus taught. Once, when two of her children had quarrelled violently, one of them said, 'Mamma, I cannot bear to be so treated.'

"'My dear,' she replied, 'you must learn to bear whatever God pleases to appoint. Even the ill-temper and harshness of others you must quietly endure, that you may gain patience and forbearance. Now I desire you to go up into your room, and open the Testament, and pray over those words, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls." And I charge you not to come downstairs to me, till you have wept and pleaded over that text; and till you have a hope that the gentle spirit of Jesus is in measure given to you.'

"The child did so; and that was an occurrence that remained in the memory, as a waymark in life's history: for never was such petulance again felt; and never again was there a quarrel between the two, who were then so angry with each other.

"Our beloved mother used to have many young persons around her, from the congregation, and read to them interesting passages from various books; and was especially anxious for the welfare of those who were soon to be united in marriage; giving them advice, which many a one, in after years, has told her was beyond all price; for to it they owed much of their happiness in the progress of life. She enforced the duty of submission on women, and used jokingly to say, 'If your husband wishes you to put a shoe on your *head*, do it to please him. Do everything for him but violate conscience.' She often said, 'Young persons, before their marriage, are studying to please in everything; taking pains with their manners, their tempers, their attire; but afterwards, when the object is gained, they neglect to keep up those things which first attracted and delighted. Whereas, love is a refined and delicate feeling, and needs to be cherished and fed. Therefore, my dear girls, be as neat and nice, as polite and attentive, as intelligent and lovely, *after* marriage, as if your husband were your lover.'

"To the youths she was in the habit of saying, 'Remember the apostolic injunction, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."' 'How extraordinary!' you will say, 'to tell me to love this treasure; this lovely creature; and not be bitter against her!' 'Ah! my dear young friend, the time may come, in life's rough journey, when your spirits will be jaded, and your hopes frustrated; and a numerous family, and straitened circumstances, will test and sour your temper; when you must resort to *duty*, and duty enforced by God, who alone can keep you in tender attachment to the woman you have chosen and vowed to love; and keep you from uttering a bitter word against her.'

"She was especially anxious that her children should never hear anything ludicrous associated with Scripture, or sacred subjects. One day, a minister came to Highbury, and mentioned some blunders that persons had made, in reading the Bible. He also told some stories of weak and uneducated people, who had said laughable things connected with their religious feelings. She was deeply grieved in spirit; and when the minister was gone, she called her children, and extorted a solemn promise from them, that they would never repeat any of the conversation they had the great misfortune to hear; and also that, if in future they heard any relations of the sort, they would never reproduce them; because Satan often made use of such things to distract and harass the mind, in seasons of devotion; and even what the holy soul hated, it could not always forget. She said she should endeavour to take an opportunity, humbly, yet forcibly, to express her feelings to the minister, who had spoken so much of the ignorance and faults of professors.

"She was ever solicitous that conversation should be rendered profitable; and when her children were going out, she used to ask them if they had prayed for wisdom and grace to use the tongue aright? whether they had been begging of God to guide those they might meet, and themselves, to speak wisely, truly, and kindly? 'A wholesome tongue,' she said, 'is a tree of life;' that organ is the glory of the frame, if God tune it, and direct it aright.'

"Our precious mother was watchful that family politeness should be constantly maintained. She dreaded that vulgar familiarity which is perilous to domestic tenderness. She said relative affection was a beauteous gem, and should ever be enshrined in respectful and courteous manners. As her husband always treated her as a lady, and she never forgot the reverence due to him, but acted towards him with constant deference, so her sons should ever treat their sisters as ladies, and the girls behave to their brothers as gentlemen. How often has she bewailed the reverse in circles she has known! Respectful attention shown to entire strangers, or company in general; and neglect and inconsideration, and even harshness, to those nearest and dearest, with whom there was daily association.

"From our childhood, she enforced gentleness and great consideration towards servants. She used to say servitude itself was to be pitied; it was a continued giving up of the will to the employer, as it regarded the time and manner of doing things; therefore there ought to be no petulance, no imperative tone, but a calm and decided one, in making every reasonable requisition; continually putting ourselves mentally in the place of the servant, and asking how we should like to be dealt with. She never had a servant give her warning, as it is termed, during above fifty years of housekeeping; and many were indebted to her, both for time and eternity. She always made it a duty to act towards them, as she would have wished her children to be treated, had such service been allotted to them. She used to say there was nothing so hard-hearted as a complete 'fine lady;' who often, through her ignorance of domestic things, expected that to be done in a few hours which it would take days to accomplish, nicely and thoroughly;—and that selfish ease was all that was thought of by many masters and mistresses.

"She was very careful of the time of poor and working people. She said it was their bread; and unnecessarily to detain them, or keep them waiting, was robbery. She deeply deplored the oppression and vexation caused to those in humble life, by such as had the command of their hours, or a purse to make up the deficiency.

"She used to inculcate on her children, the importance of never letting an opportunity to oblige or serve another slip by. She said, 'Little children can do so few things to be useful, and show their gratitude to others, that they should watch to please; and if in the village or street they see a poor old person drop his stick, should run and pick it up for him; or if an animal is hurt or in distress, try and help it: thus always cultivating the disposition to be kind and helpful whenever they can.'

"These may seem small matters, comparatively, but 'trifles make up the sum of human things,' and attention to them materially adds to domestic and social enjoyment."

Such is a brief account of the excellent lady, from whom Mr. Clayton was called, by the providence of God, to part, on January 11th, 1836, at the age of ninety years; and the rest of his life's journey he had to pursue alone.

This chapter may fitly conclude with the following letter, from the Rev. Joseph Sortain to the Rev. George Clayton:—

"27, BEDFORD SQUARE, BRIGHTON, 18*th Jan.*, 1836.

"MY VERY DEAR SIR,—In the *Globe*, last Saturday, I read an account of the death of the invaluable Mrs. Clayton. This is the only channel through which I have been informed of it; but I am desirous of losing no time in expressing our sincere sympathy with yourself and family.

"I have been thinking, if it is possible to imagine a case in which death could have been more fully deprived of his wonted sting? Mrs. Clayton has been spared so long, and meanwhile has had the declivity of life made so gentle in its descent; has had the usual monotony of age so cheered and kept alive, by the active events and usefulness of her sons' lives, and has been so fully comforted with the consolations of hope and faith, that I can conceive of no more holy or pleasing an end. She has indeed been a 'shock of corn fully ripe.' In some instances, it would seem as if the seed was left too long after maturity, only to gather mildew and expend its healthiness; but this, though the ingathering has been long delayed, was still 'golden.'

"I trust that the venerable survivor will have that grace given him which shall diminish the force of this severe shock. May I beg my sincerest sympathies to be offered to him?

"Believe me, my very dear sir, most faithfully and sympathizingly yours,

"JOSEPH SORTAIN."

Chapter XXI.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON.—1836–1843.

CLOSING YEARS.—SPIRITUAL CONTRASTS.—QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.—FAMILY BEREAVEMENTS.—INTEREST IN PUBLIC MATTERS.—LAST MONTHS OF LIFE.—MEMORANDA OF HIS CHILDREN.—LAST HOURS.—DEATH.—FUNERAL SERVICES.—EXTRACT FROM REV. GEORGE CLAYTON'S SERMON.—SUMMARY OF CHARACTER, AND LEGACY OF WISDOM TO HIS SONS AS PREACHERS.—LETTER OF REV. J. SORTAIN.

In the retirement of Gaines, Mr. Clayton's last days glided peacefully away. A sweet serenity of spirit possessed his soul, even when he looked out on the stirring world beyond; for he knew that amid the complicated wheels of various national and social revolutions, which were then startling Europe, a divine Spirit was moving; that out of apparent confusion and commotion would evolve order and beauty; and righteousness and truth be established among men.

This quietude of existence was broken, as we have seen, by the death of his son William, in 1838: an event which he felt deeply, and which tended still more to loosen the ties that bound him to life. His principal employment now was the preparation for his own departure, which he knew could not be far distant. He lived very near the eternal world; and realized the solemnity, and, at the same time, the happiness, which a close proximity to heaven produces. He was permitted now to enjoy a "consolation and good hope through grace," in delightful contrast to the stormy time of doubt through which he passed, in his earlier years.

In reference to that period his son George says, in one of his memoranda:—

"Mr. Clayton was occasionally the subject of such inward conflict, severe temptations, and depressions, that all was little enough to keep him, in certain seasons of inward trial and conflict, from total despair. It is not wise to lift the veil from the exercises of Christian experience, even in good and holy men; yet it may afford some comfort to tried and tempted Christians to know, that the same harassments they endure from the arch tempter, are common to others of their brethren, in this probationary state. Richard Baxter, in his *Dying Thoughts*, records, that there were particular seasons in which he had been left to wish he had been created a horse, or a toad, or some other viler reptile, rather than an accountable and immortal being: upon which Mr. Clayton writes on the margin of the leaf, '*Et ego quoque.* J. C.'

"At certain periods of his life, temptation had pressed so ruthlessly upon his spirit, that he has been known to request that he might not be left alone. It was the saying of Martin Luther that three things go to form the minister,—meditation, temptation, and prayer. Happy they who escape the second in its direst forms; but happier still they who, under such circumstances, can repair in faith to Him 'who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,' and is therefore able to sympathize with and succour them that are tempted."

Thus, on two occasions, Mr. Clayton,—in a private note-book, of very early date, which he appears to have preserved from the flames, to which he consigned the rest of his manuscript, for the purpose of enabling him, by the perusal of these brief but pregnant records of his early mental struggles, to appreciate the devout peace of mind he now enjoyed—wrote as follows:—

"I am filled with shame when I examine my own heart. At present, I cannot perceive that I have at all grown in sanctity; and I am suffused with a mixture of shame, dejection, and despair, when I consider that I sustain the character and office of a minister. I have little zeal and still less ability, and deeply regret the want of a better education.

"Mysterious providence! I entered on the work of preaching a raw, inexperienced youth. I am now fixed as a pastor, in a sphere where great abilities seem necessary; the want of them in me gives a striking proof of God's sovereignty. I am astonished at my success. O Lord! it is thy pleasure to make use of inconsiderable instruments, to accomplish great designs, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of thyself."

The next extract indicates the terrible conflict of soul through which he passed, while doubtful not only of his call to the ministry of the Gospel, but of his possession of any real piety at all—his misgivings concerning the one fearfully aggravating his doubts concerning the other.

"O what a Sabbath has this been! I ought to be astonished, above measure, that I am out of hell. My heart has been full of rebellion and discontent. I have been on the brink of giving up all,—my pastoral charge, the ministry, yea, the profession of religion. I was, in my own apprehension, the greatest hypocrite in the congregation. I could scarcely open my mouth in prayer. My present feelings—the duties that lie before me to perform—press my spirit so exceedingly, that relief must soon arrive, or I know not what will become of me. O Lord, I am oppressed sore; undertake for me. All thy waves and billows are gone over me. My sins are innumerable, and aggravated to the last degree. O Lord, my spirit is overwhelmed within me. Give me help, speedily. Thou that hearest the young ravens when they cry, be not silent unto me, lest I be like those that go down into the pit. 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.'"

Happily this agitation passed away. God drew him up from the depths, "set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings." Through all his subsequent ministerial life he was enabled to keep fast hold of the promises; and his earnest and uncompromising maintenance of the truth, in all his ministrations, and his fervent appeals to his hearers, to receive that truth into their hearts, were the result of his own personal experience of its value. He could, with the apostle, say, "Having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, 'I believed, and therefore have I spoken;' we also believe, and therefore speak."

That his attention to his ministerial duties might not be suffered to create and nourish the delusion, that an official discharge thereof must, of necessity, keep the heart right with God, he was accustomed to institute a daily examination of himself, with a strict scrutiny of his desires and motives. He drew up a series of inquiries which he headed, "Questions for my own heart, every evening," which were as follow:—

"(1.) Did I awake with God in the morning, and in His strength resolve to walk with Him all the day long? Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.

"(2.) Did I willingly leave my bed, that I might go to prayer, and search the Word of God? Did I long for and enjoy communion with God, in these duties? Psalm v. 3; cxix. 147.

"(3.) Have I walked within my house with a perfect heart? praying with the inmates, edifying them, and giving no occasion of offence or stumbling to them?

"Every Christian's family should be like Philemon's—a *church.* Genesis xviii. 19; Joshua xxiv. 15; Philemon 2, 3.

"(4.) Have I kept my heart, this day, with all diligence? The heart should be kept *for* God; and *from* sin and Satan, and this present evil world.

"(5.) Have I so walked and prayed, that I might not enter into temptation?

"(6.) Have I done justly, and acted as if I loved mercy? 1 Thessalonians iv. 6; Titus ii. 11, 12.

"(7.) Have I bridled my tongue? James i. 26.

"(8.) Have I been spiritual in my civil employments? 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

"(9.) Have I been careful to redeem time? Psalm xc. 12.

"(10.) Have I received mercies thankfully, and borne crosses patiently?

"(11.) How much have I advanced in heaven's way, to-day?

"(12.) Have I waited upon the Lord all this day long? Psalm xxv. 3.

"(13.) What care have I had, to adorn the Gospel this day, and to win those that are without to a love of religion? Philippians ii. 15."

Thus, through his lengthened life, he strove to fulfil the apostolic injunction, "Examine yourselves; prove your own selves;" and though ever humbled under a deep sense of his deficiencies, he could "rejoice that he had the testimony of his conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had had his conversation in the world."

Domestic bereavements were now following one another fast. Those of 1836 and 1838 have been referred to. In April, 1840, his eldest son's faithful and devoted wife passed away to her rest; and in August, 1842, another chasm was created in the domestic circle at Gaines, by the death of Mrs. George Clayton, at Brighton. Of both these ladies some notice will be given in a future page.

The winter of this year brought with it increased weakness to the aged Christian, who began to be conscious that soon he must lay aside his pilgrim's staff and shoon, and exchange a temporary for an eternal home. Some dropsical symptoms became apparent, which increased till the time of his death. Yet still his interest in the cause of his divine Master was unabated; and thus, in one of his latest communications to his son George, he writes, under date December 19th, 1842:—

"The glorious Gospel of the blessed God affords me a sacred calmness of mind, which will not, I trust, be found delusive, at the coming of Jesus Christ. I am comforted by knowing that my surviving sons, with many others, faithful men, are diligently preaching the unadulterated truth 'as it is in Jesus.' I lament over Oxford, which is now sending out captains to lead the population of our Protestant country back to mystical Egypt. May the Holy Spirit lift up His standard against the enemy, which is coming in like a flood; and which I fear will drown numbers in destruction and perdition."

The words of his surviving children will best describe the closing months of Mr. Clayton's life:—

"On the sacramental Sabbath, in February, 1843, he appeared for the last time in the pulpit; and a supply having failed, he delivered a short and pathetic discourse on the text, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'—affectionately urging his hearers to betake themselves to the atonement of Jesus, as the only foundation of their hopes for eternity. While his disease was making slow, but certain progress, his spirit was obviously meetening for that heaven to which he aspired. He familiarized himself with the admonitory infirmities which, he said, were 'the inexorable messengers, to warn him of the approach of death;' and often expressed his gratitude that they 'did not subject him to acute pain, nor hinder him in the employment of those private means of grace, through which he could still hold communion with his Saviour and Lord.' He conversed much with his relatives and friends, on the goodness and mercy of God, which had followed him all the days of his life. He expatiated largely on his vast obligations to that divine Saviour, in whom he reposed his confidence, and whom he frequently entreated 'to release him from the prison of the flesh, and receive him into the everlasting arms of His mercy.' 'I am thankful, also,' he said, 'that I usually enjoy much peace of mind; not, I trust, the calm of indifference or delusion, but derived from the righteousness and sacrifice of the Son of God.' When one of his kindred offered him a congratulation, on the serenity of his mind and the firmness of his hopes, he lifted up his voice, and added—'Yes! but I am no hero on a dying bed. Christ is all my hope: I am nothing without Him;' and then, with tears of mingled love and humiliation, he quoted the lines of one of his favourite hymns—

'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress,' &c.

"His faculties remained unbroken during his protracted indisposition; his devotional spirit was uniform; his affection constantly breathing itself forth towards his surrounding children and attendants; while he poured out brief and importunate prayers for the maintenance of piety among his descendants; for the prosperity of the pastoral charges of his successor and his sons; for the little flock in the village of his residence, and for the advancement of the kingdom of the Redeemer throughout the world. The last few days of his mortal existence he spent in the repeated expression of kind wishes for those around him, and in holy aspirations to his Lord and Master, whose coming he ardently desired."*

Mrs. Johnson noted down each day, during the last week of her father's life, the various occurrences and conversations that took place; as everything indicated that the sands in the hour-glass were nearly run, and all around him desired to treasure up sacredly, in their memories, the words of wisdom, and piety, and humility, that fell from his lips.

"*September* 14.—Both my loved brothers prayed with him, at different parts of the day. He was greatly impressed by the abounding mercy of God, in giving him such sons; and spoke of them with great tenderness, expressing his utter unworthiness of such exalted favour."

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* *The Present and Future Privileges of the Believer:* a Sermon delivered at the Poultry Chapel, on the death of the Rev. John Clayton, by his son.

On the 15th, Mr. George Clayton visited him again, and records a conversation he held with him :—

"I found him very feeble, and much oppressed by infirmity. He observed that he had passed a very trying night, much disturbed with violent coughing. 'I several times thought myself at the point of dissolution,' he said. I reminded him that he might suffer more than he had done already, ere that change should come; and expressed a hope that patience might have its perfect work. 'I am looking to the God of patience,' he replied, 'for a continual supply of patience. O to endure unto the end! God has wise and gracious reasons for keeping me in the furnace. There's something to be got rid of, and something more to be attained, that I may shine in His image.' I reminded him of the saying of the apostle, 'Our light affliction,' &c. 'What wondrous words are these,' he exclaimed; 'an eternal weight of glory!'

"He then spoke very feelingly of Christ, as the forerunner, who had taken possession of heaven for us, having, by His own merit and blood-shedding, entered into the holy place. He made inquiry concerning some temporal matters; and then said, 'How truly may I say, for myself and family, the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me and mine, as a provider, a protector, a benefactor, and especially as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed, for ever blessed be His name! I have every attention and alleviation which my condition will admit of. I am often looking back upon the rock whence I was hewn, and say, "Who am I, O Lord, and what is my house?"'

"He spoke of the refreshment he enjoyed, from a prayer offered for him by his elder son. 'Dear fellow,' he gently murmured, 'it proved a great comfort to me.' He spoke of what he felt from the loss of public ordinances. He wanted to be edified by the gifts and graces of others. He referred to family worship, performed with enfeebled powers, but never omitted. He said, a form of prayer which he sometimes used, although not so copious as he wished, yet kept up connexion with God, through Jesus Christ, the Mediator."

Mrs. Johnson continues her narrative of the last hours of her father :—

"*September* 16.—On entering his chamber, he said, 'I am just alive, waiting for the Son of David, who has the key. He openeth, and no man shutteth. O if it would please Him, this day, to open to my spirit the gates of everlasting life!'

"*Sabbath morning.*—As Mary Wilton and myself were sitting near the bed, while he dozed, he looked up, and said, 'And they watched Him there. I am honoured by having those who *love* Jesus to watch by me;—assimilated to the Great Head of the church.'

"After he had been got up, and wheeled into an adjoining room, he asked for the Bible, and was left in quiet, for his devotions. This was the last time he was able to read. The chapter in course was 1 Peter ii. When I returned to him I said, 'My dear and honoured father, I have been reviewing your Sabbaths at the Weighhouse.' He replied, 'Ah! my dear; blessed be God, I was permitted to preach there for nearly fifty years. But, oh! my deficiencies, in motive, rule, and aim! God be merciful to me, a sinner. Blessed be His name! there is a great High Priest to bear away the iniquity of our holy things.'

"After having lifted him into his bed, with considerable trial to himself, and frequent pauses, lest his breath should fail him, I said, 'Now I trust you will have some refreshing sleep.' He raised both his hands and said, 'If it be thy blessed will, O blessed God, grant to one of thy most unworthy creatures repose—

> "Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

I need a fresh sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; O grant it to me! May every blessing descend on those agents who are appointed to help me. Guide, protect, and comfort them.' Then, with a solemn invocation to the sacred Trinity, he concluded, 'Amen and Amen.'

"On Monday morning he was partially dressed, and taken into the next chamber. The Bible was brought, as usual; but, on looking over the page, he said, 'My head and eyes are so weak I cannot see;' so the chapter was read to him. Then he said, 'Oh! holy and blessed book,—praised be God for the sacred records!'

"On Tuesday he sat up for a few hours. The impress of death was on his countenance, which was emaciated, and almost transparent. His silver hair glistening, his eyes bright, and altogether presenting such a peculiar unearthly appearance—he seemed an inhabitant of another world. He did not ask for the morning reading, but had Isaiah lv. repeated to him, and then desired prayer to be offered. After this, in extreme and sad weakness, he was lifted into bed, and appeared almost exhausted when the slightest movement was made.

"He then slept some hours; partly from the effects of a sedative, given to quiet the cough, which, at intervals, was most violent and distressing. He often prayed for patience, and said, 'Lord, help me; Lord, have mercy upon me.'

"On Thursday, about half-past eleven, he was slightly convulsed, and exclaimed, 'Raise me up, raise me up; I am dying.' He soon, however, became calm; and had no more such apparent conflict. Early in the morning my brother John called. On taking leave, his father said, 'Farewell, dear John; peace be with you:' the last words he uttered to him.

"My brother George stayed at the house, deeply and tenderly anxious to watch the ascent of the immortal spirit to glory, and catch the falling mantle of the faithful servant of God. He was seldom from the bedside; but once, having left the room for a short time, he was called up hastily, and bending over the sufferer said, 'When thou passest through the waters they shall not overflow thee.' His father was rather agitated by the excessive difficulty of breathing, and said, 'Oh! this I cannot bear; I cannot bear.' Then quiet was graciously restored; and he breathed gradually shorter, with his eyes closed, for some time.

"In the afternoon George repeated one of his favourite hymns, 'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,' &c., &c.; and in some lines was at a loss. The dying saint supplied the word or sentence needed. When the hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' was repeated to him, and the line came, 'Still support and comfort me,' he said twice, 'Still support and comfort me: comfort *me*.' He often raised his hand and said,

'Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.'

'Lord, have mercy on me; Christ, have mercy on me.' When my brother prayed with him, he joined most devoutly, and said, 'O the mercy of having such sons! Thank you, George; thank you.'

"The night was partly dozed away, when his most devoted and tender nurse and friend said, 'Sir, can I do anything for you?' he replied, 'Nothing, my dear, unless you could go into eternity with me.'

"At half-past six, on Friday morning, his faithful female servant came into the chamber, and he very inarticulately inquired after her welfare. When he was asked, 'Is Jesus with you?' he made a slight assenting sound, but could not speak.

"At a quarter before nine, the messenger of release was evidently come; and all present kneeled around the bed. Dearest brother George commended the departing spirit to the care of angels, and the bosom of the Redeemer; and at nine the last sigh was breathed. Then we kneeled again, and George gave thanks for the mercy vouchsafed to the loved and honoured saint.

"The heavens seemed opened: the shining ones took him to the Celestial City; the harpers sounded a welcome; the ransomed, rescued souls, whom he had led to Jesus, hailed him; the spirits of relations, gone before, rejoiced in his entrance to the New Jerusalem; and he saw Him, whom he had so constantly and ardently longed to behold, 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'"

His mortal remains were committed to the tomb, in Bunhill Fields, where already several members of his family had been laid; the funeral services being conducted by Dr. Burder. On the following Lord's day sermons were preached by his sons, and by other ministers, who desired to testify their veneration for the excellencies of the departed, and to magnify the grace of God in him. Mr. John Clayton's sermon was from the appropriate text, Psalm xci. 16, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

His son George preached to his own people at Walworth, from 2 Kings ii. 11, 12—the translation of Elijah. From this latter unpublished discourse I give the following extract, as a summary of the leading characteristics of his venerable father:—

"Let me show the applicability of the circumstances narrated, in this account of the translation of Elijah, to the case before us.

"Your pastor has verified it in some of its distinguishing features. He had a great desire and determination, like Elisha, to witness the last conflict; and it was granted to him. He talked with him, as he drew near to the Jordan; he beheld the change, and the departure, which was peaceful and glorious; and from the depths of his heart cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.' In this exclamation many here will unite.

"He loved the congregation at York Street. I never visited him, but he inquired after you and your families. The last sacramental service he ever celebrated, was here. You will remember the majesty, the solemn seriousness and benignity, with which he rose to give you his blessing, at the close of the service. The affectionate greetings which he received from you, were fragrant as precious ointment; and, as it has happened, therewith was he anointed for his burial.

"I may sum up his character in a few sentences.

"1. As a Christian and a minister, he was of divine, not human formation; not a mere creature of tuition or imitation. The hand of God was manifestly seen in all the incidents that led to his introduction to the ministerial office, and in the subsequent movements of his eventful life.

"2. He was distinguished by his steady attachment to truth and holiness. His testimony he bore with unflinching courage, against error in doctrine; against ritualistic novelties in worship; and against everything dishonourable in practice. In nothing was he more stern, than in his denunciations of shameless and dishonest commercial transactions, and revolutionary movements, in the political world.

"3. He was distinguished by eminent prudence and discretion, in all his affairs. He was frugal in his habits, but never parsimonious; beneficent, but not profuse; remembering he was to be a wise steward, who neither on himself nor others wasted his Master's goods.

"4. He was a decided and conscientious Nonconformist. He never concealed his convictions, nor compromised his principles. Yet he could never bring himself to speak in terms of disrespect and contempt of the Established Church. He could not forget that at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, under Mr. Romaine, he first drew the breath of spiritual life. He associated much with the clergymen of that church, and prayed fervently for all its members. During his later years it was a part of his Sabbath work to read over, in his closet, the morning service of the Book of Common Prayer, never omitting the Litany; in order, as he said, that he might hold communion with the members of that fellowship, on the Lord's day. There was no acrimony in his nonconformity. He gave, as he claimed, the right to every man to choose for himself, according to his deep and solemn convictions. He loved all, and treated all with courtesy, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and bore His image.

"5. He was eminently blessed with conversational talents. He was almost as useful by his private addresses, as by his public ministrations. All was natural and unaffected. There was no offensiveness of tone, but a deep and evident solicitude for the good of those he addressed. His manner was ever kind, yet with an air of authority, that made him impressive and commanding. In the midst of his public labours, and afterwards in his retirement, he lost no opportunity of doing good. He had a marvellous facility of adaptation of address to the persons spoken to, and to the circumstances that were occurring at the time—a rare and most precious talent.

"6. As a preacher he was ever dignified, serious, scriptural, animated, earnest, and affectionate. His appearance, his voice, his manner, all told mightily on his audience. Well do I remember how often his congregation listened in deep silence; and the breathless pauses that were frequently noticed in that crowded assembly, when the people seemed to hang on his lips. His was the eloquence of nature, not of art; and the effects that followed were great. 'The word was with power.'"

All who remember the venerable preacher, to whom his son thus refers, will confirm the testimony here given, as to the striking effects produced by his pulpit ministrations. For these, as has been stated, he made very careful preparations. Among Mr. George Clayton's papers I found the following hints, which he, along with his brothers, received from their father, as designed to help *them* in their studies for the pulpit; and may not be inappropriately introduced here. They may, doubtless, be regarded as descriptive of the course he himself usually pursued; and will explain the originality, freedom, and vigour, which characterized his public addresses:—

"In composing your sermons, endeavour," said he, "to ascertain, by every possible method, the genuine sense and design of the passage. In order to do this, resort to your Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament: mark well the context, and other collateral portions of Holy Scripture; and consult judicious and approved commentators, with a just appreciation of their opinions, but not with slavish deference. Let your thoughts in sermonizing be the offspring of your own minds. You may borrow another man's spectacles, but be careful always to see with your own eyes. Avoid plagiarism, and the intentional imitation of any living preacher, however eminent or popular. I have found it a wholesome exercise, after my own preparations have been completed, to read the work of some sound divine of established celebrity, on the subject of the intended discourse, not for the purpose of furnishing extracts or quotations, but of rectifying any misconceptions into which I might have inadvertently fallen, and of catching the spirit and unction of the best of our theological writers.

"Study variety in the choice of your topics of discourse. Tether not yourself nor your hearers to a few favourite themes; but walk at large through the fair field of revelation, in the length and breadth of it. Old *knowledge* continually repeated, grows wearisome, and excites disgust. Like the hoarded manna in the

Israelitish camp, it breeds worms and corruption. Old *truths* as often as you please; but presented to the mind in all the freshness of recent composition, with such additional lights as time, reflection, and experience may cast upon them. Beware of 'the sallow manuscript;' unless you set to work upon it, in order to give it fresh attire, and adjust it skilfully to the existing state of things, and the ever-varying exigencies of your people.

"Furthermore, cautiously guard against monotony in your tones: they have a deadening effect, and dispose to somnolence on the part of the hearer. Beware, also, of contracting, insensibly, unseemly habits in public service; distortions of the countenance, in the devotional exercises; and awkward twitchings of the body, in preaching. Give the people the benefit of the eye, by looking at those you address, instead, as some have done, of fixing your gaze on the ceiling, the opposite wall, or the pulpit cushion."

He urgently recommended a style of tender expostulation in public addresses. Criticism, logical niceties, elaborate disquisitions, he believed to be unedifying and uninteresting to the majority of our auditories, and much out of place in the sacred desk. "That which is required is the lucid statement of the truth of the Gospel; something that will '*strike* and *stay*,' pressed home upon the consciences and feelings of the hearers."

He mentioned, in reference to pulpit criticism, that when newly settled in London, he went to hear an elder minister, who was held in great repute, for his varied and extensive learning. Having taken his text from the prophet's vision of "the baskets of summer fruit," he bestowed three quarters of an hour in discussing the material and shape, and capacity of the baskets, at that time in use amongst the Jews; quoting largely from Hebrew authors, of great antiquity, and at last left it altogether uncertain whether these baskets were of wicker or straw, of porcelain or metal; whether oval, round, or square, whether of larger or smaller quantity. He then drew his discourse to a close, lamenting that the time was far spent, and that he must necessarily abstain from the improvement of the subject which he had contemplated. Mr. Clayton being asked how he liked the sermon, could only reply, "We have heard much of the baskets, but where was the fruit?"

He frequently and solemnly inculcated the duty and necessity of prayer, in the composition of sermons, and all preparations for the pulpit. "Pray, before you begin—pray, as you proceed—pray, when you have finished;" quoting often the well-known saying, "*Bene orasse, est bene studuisse.*" "Watch also with anxious expectation for the result. The happy consequences of the faithful proclamation of the Gospel, when circumstances permit, should be diligently inquired for; and they are well worth looking after, as supplying a present encouragement to the minister, and useful direction in his future course."

With these words of good sound sense and wisdom, the memoir of Mr. Clayton must close. That he was a man who deserved well of his contemporaries, and one, the memory of whom should not pass utterly away, without some such attempt as has here been made to introduce him "to the generation following," will, I think, be admitted, even though the work of the biographer may have been imperfectly performed. Mr. Sortain's words, in a note of condolence, which he addressed to Mr. George Clayton, when he heard of his father's death, record the opinion of all who knew the subject of his eulogy, and may fitly end this chapter:—

"You and your whole family have the best sympathies of the entire Christian church. I believe that there never was a servant of Christ, who, after a most honourable, dignified, consistent, and useful life, 'waited for the consolation of Israel' with a more legitimate hope. It was his lot to be the link between the calm, soberminded, judicious ministry of the former generation, and the fervid, active one of the present. O! would that we could with 'like patience possess our souls.'

"I trust, my dear sir, that Mrs. Clayton and Mrs. Johnson are enabled, with yourself, so brightly to realize the reward which the patriarch is now enjoying, that you feel no gloom. 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'"

Chapter XXII.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON.—1834-1848.

MINISTERIAL PROSPERITY. — DEATH OF MRS. JOHN CLAYTON. — SKETCH OF HER LIFE AND CHARACTER BY HER HUSBAND. — RESIDENCE AT ROMFORD.—SECOND MARRIAGE.—ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE POULTRY CHAPEL PASTORATE. — LETTERS TO AND FROM THE CHURCH.—RESIGNATION.—"WELCOME TO TITUS."—PRESENTATION OF TESTIMONIAL.

Until the commencement of 1836, the even current of Mr. John Clayton's domestic and public life flowed on, as we have described it, in a former chapter, with no other than the ordinary interruptions that are incident to mortal existence. His autumn was a truly golden one; rich in the ripe fruits of experience and wisdom, of which multitudes were privileged to partake. His preaching was never characterized by more unction than at this time. With no less fervour than he had displayed in his more youthful ministrations, it had that mellowness which only years can give; and the large congregations that used to listen to him, with devout pleasure, never more thoroughly realized the meaning of the words of the prophet Isaiah: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

But, as has been stated, the opening month of 1836 introduced a great destroyer into the household at Gaines, and his venerable mother was summoned to her rest. Two years later, the sudden death of his brother William occurred, at Mill Hill, on March 15th, 1838; and the increasing solemnity of his own position was deeply felt, as voices from the unseen world became more and more audible, and gleams thence seemed more vividly to flash before his eyes.

He was destined, however, after two more years had elapsed, to feel the keenest pangs of bereavement he had yet known; when the same dread messenger, who had invaded the sanctities of the happy homes at Gaines and Mill Hill, came to beckon away from his side the wife of his bosom, who for thirty-seven years had been the light and life of his household.

A funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Dr. Burder, on the occasion of Mrs. Clayton's death, which occurred April 23rd, 1840, had appended to it a sketch of the deceased, which, though not avowedly acknowledged as from her husband's pen, bears unequivocal evidence of its authorship. It is given here entire, as presenting a better and more lifelike portraiture than any other hand could draw. "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

"The late Mrs. Sarah Clayton was the daughter of Mr. William Ellis, of Fenchurch Street, London, and entered this world on the 28th of December, 1779. Her childhood was spent chiefly at home; as from the delicate state of her health she was not able to bear the bustle, and some of the inevitable restraints, of school. The instruction which she received was partly from an aunt, and partly at the establishment of Mrs. Walker, of Hackney. She was in the constant habit of attending, with her parents, on the ministry of the Rev. John Clayton, of the King's Weighhouse, Eastcheap; and under his discourses was frequently the subject of deep convictions of sin. An intimacy having been formed between her and the sister of the Rev. George Ford, of Stepney, she often went to hear him at Zion chapel, and Orange Street, Leicester Square. It was while attending to one of his discourses that her inquiring and anxious mind obtained spiritual relief; and it proved the more immediate instrument of that change, which she always considered as her conversion to God. It has been her frequent exclamation, 'O that I could always be the subject of those lively impressions, which I felt when Mr. Ford gave his address to the people, from that beautiful passage, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."'

"On the 4th of June, 1801, she was united to the church at Stepney; and remained in communion with that Christian society till her marriage with the Rev. John Clayton, jun., in 1803.

"It is obvious, from the written records of her experience, that her entrance on so new a sphere of relationship and duty called forth a spirit of most earnest prayer, that she might not only prove a suitable partner to her husband, but that, in the semi-public station in which she was to be occupied, she might exemplify the character of a Christian minister's wife. This was a period in which she evidently spent much time in converse with God, and in the exercise of habitual vigilance, that neither her religious profession, nor the ministry to which she was allied, might be justly blamed.

"'I think,' she writes, 'that some of those who marry ministers carry themselves proudly, so that the poor are afraid of them; and some are so vulgar, that the rich are disgusted with them; some are so light and trifling, that they are hindrances rather than helpmeets to their husbands. O Lord, preserve me from these three evils!'

"In the course of a comparatively few years, she became the mother of eight children; three of whom are numbered with the dead, and five of whom survive. During this period of life, her domestic character pleasantly and advantageously exhibited itself to view. Punctual in her early morning devotions, she was always prepared calmly to enter on the duties of the busy day; and was remarkable for the order, accuracy, and efficiency of their fulfilment. She often quoted a familiar saying of her mother-in-law, 'That everything in a family should have its proper place and season; and that the mistress should guide the house, and not drive it.' She was very considerate, as to the requirements which she made of her servants; and wished, as she said, 'to see them always adequately employed, but not in a violent hurry; as the work was then likely to be ill done, and bad tempers to be excited.'

"As the minds of her little ones were developed, she attentively watched the opportunities of conveying the simple truths of the Gospel to their understandings, as well as of applying them to their hearts; and her surviving sons and daughters can attest, how earnest and constant were her efforts to conduct them to that gentle Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom; and how repeatedly, on the evenings of the Sabbath, as she knelt in the midst of the youthful group, she bedewed their heads with the tears of devout desire, that 'Christ might be formed in their hearts, the hope of glory.'

"The following extract from her diary will best exhibit the state of her mind, in reference to the eternal welfare of her children:—

"'I have just had an interesting and melting interview with my two sons. I entered into full conversation with them, on the great concerns of their souls; and was enabled to engage in prayer with them, with much liberty. This solemn interview will not be forgotten by me. O that it may produce serious impressions on them! I feel it a most momentous affair to be a parent; and as my children rise up into society, I am anxious to know that they have commenced their travels to a better country. The hopes and fears to which Christian parents are liable, can only be fully known by experience. What would satisfy a worldly, is not sufficient for the Christian, father or mother. No; we cannot fully rejoice till we can say, "Our children are walking in the truth." I want something more than mental furniture upon common subjects, and decency of conduct. I long for the tears of penitence, for the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" for the holy and bold resolution to join themselves to the Lord, in a covenant not to be forgotten. Oh! to hear them say,

"Here, Lord, we give ourselves away;
'Tis all that we can do."

Lord, hear my request! I ask not, as the mother of Zebedee's children, that my two sons may be eminent in their stations in this life—that I leave entirely in thy hands; but I do importunately ask that they may have seats in the church on earth, and in the kingdom of heaven at last.'

"In the arrangements of providence, her companion removed from Kensington, where he was first fixed, as a pastor, and settled over the church in Camomile Street, London, which was in a widowed state, owing to the death of the Rev. John Reynolds. In the year 1819, the Christian community removing to the new chapel in the Poultry, an alteration soon took place in the times of conducting public worship. It then became the practice of Mrs. Clayton to devote the afternoon of the Lord's day to her children; and she thus states her opinion upon the subject:—

"'If I were in single life, or had no family, I should generally deem it my duty to instruct in the Sunday school; but I do not like those ostriches, who run to great distances in the desert, and neglect their own brood.'

"Her custom she continued, therefore, until her offspring reached an age when they retired to read by themselves, or attended the services of some neighbouring sanctuary. As they successively passed away into society, and into different positions of life, she was wont to say, 'Well, our children are no longer under the wing of our immediate protection; now let us spread the wings of more earnest prayer for them.' During this course of parental proceeding, it was the habit of herself and husband to devote special seasons to prayer, that the blessing of God might rest on their united endeavours to train up their children in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

"While Mrs. Clayton shone in the domestic department, to which she was principally devoted, in her earlier years of married life, her example in the public scene became brighter and brighter, as she advanced. Many of the religious and benevolent societies at the Poultry originated exclusively in her agency, assisted, for a considerable length of time, by only one or two steady coadjutors. In the establishment and movements of all she became singularly active.* Her words were,—

"'I think that I am acquiring some influence among our beloved people; and as it is a talent for which I am responsible, I must try and turn it to a good account. I am ashamed to see so many professors, who have much leisure, but who spend their time in nothing else but idle gossiping, and give themselves up to no useful pursuit whatever. O Lord, may I not be a drone, but a busy bee, in the hive to which I belong!'

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* Amongst numerous letters of affectionate condolence, which Mr. Clayton has received from Christian friends, since the decease of the lamented subject of the above brief memoir, are valuable communications from the deacons of the church, and the committees of all the societies at the Poultry chapel, expressive of their sympathy; and attesting the calm but energetic zeal with which Mrs. Clayton devoted herself to their several interests.

"The committees of the Schools, of the Maternal and Benevolent Societies, and of the Cheap Clothing Society, can bear testimony to her zeal for their welfare, and her untiring assiduity to maintain their useful operations. She was the life and soul of the Friendly Female Society, instituted for the removal of a debt of a thousand pounds on the school-house and asylum; and upon her completion of that enterprise, on her return home, her joy was such that she wept profusely, and exclaimed, as her husband read over the details of the meetings, 'I feel that I am an utterly unprofitable servant towards God; but I bless His name, that He has enabled me and my companions, notwithstanding some have discouraged us, to finish this work.'

"Some time afterwards, on the receipt of a silver tea-service, and a purse of one hundred guineas for her husband, from the church and congregation, and which (to use her own words) were 'presented in a manner so unostentatious, delicate, and affectionate, as to delight her heart;' she was so overpowered with strong emotions that, for many days together, she was occasionally weeping (as she said) 'with gratitude to God, and tender attachment to the people of her choice;' adding, 'I am no admirer of those religious ramblers who rove everywhere, and seem to me, after all, to do little or nothing that is effective. I dwell among my own people.'

"About five years ago, Mrs. Clayton was attacked with an affection which seemed to indicate a disease of the heart, which greatly enfeebled her strength, and which, in connexion with certain painful anxieties respecting some of her children, bore down her animal spirits. On her recovery, from a confinement of some months to her chamber, she writes: 'I have felt a very strong temptation to retire altogether into privacy; but I must resist it; and hope to pursue an active course, with as much vigour as the impaired state of my health will admit.' This determination she amply fulfilled; for, until her last fatal illness, she was unremitting in her attempts to sustain and advance those institutions, in the prosperity of which she took so lively an interest.

"It was on her attendance on a meeting of the young persons who had been educated in the schools, that she caught a violent cold. She strove against it for a few days; but it issued in an attack of influenza and sore throat, which rendered her incapable of swallowing anything but a little liquid, for ten days. An imposthume also formed in the right ear, which gave her great pain; but on its breaking, she found relief, and appeared to be gradually recovering.

"On Tuesday, the 22nd of April, 1840, she sat up for two hours, in the afternoon; and on the return of her husband from an anniversary service, he took a chair by her side, and inquired how she felt, as to body and mind. With a smile of love and of Christian hope on her countenance, she said, 'As to the body, I am certainly much better, though I have such sensations in my head, and such a numbness in my arm, that I have an impression I shall not ultimately recover from this attack; but I think I shall some day go off suddenly, like my aunt. As to the mind,' she added, 'I enjoy a singular calmness, for so anxious a being as I am. I wished to tell you what a Sabbath morning I spent in bed. I had such a sense of God's love to me, in all His dealings, and such a sweet persuasion of my interest in Christ, that I felt as though I could give my mortal interests up, and make my God my all. I assure you, it was to me a Sabbath morning of unmixed delight, and seemed like a foretaste of heaven.'

"And so it was—a taste of the grapes of Canaan, before she crossed the Jordan. On Thursday, the 23rd, she relapsed; and an extreme restlessness came on, which was most distressing to witness. Two medical attendants saw her, both of whom entertained a hope that the malady would again yield to appropriate treatment. In the evening she stated that her head had become so bad that she should lose her senses, if she had not a composing draught given to her, and which she importuned the nurse to administer. A moderate opiate had been provided, in case of necessity; and soon after she had taken it she sunk into a tranquil slumber.

"At four o'clock on Friday morning, her husband went into the room and found her asleep, though apparently breathing with some difficulty, and stated that in a couple of hours he would return. About twenty minutes to five, her attendant knocked at his door, and said, 'O sir, will you come into my mistress's room? for she has given two or three sighs, and really seems as though she did not breathe!' He hastened into the chamber, and finding no pulsation at the wrist, and no beating at the heart, as he wiped away the cold perspiration from her face, and bent over her, to give her a parting kiss, he saw unequivocal indications that her spirit had fled from the clay tenement, and had winged its way to the bosom of her Saviour and her God. The household was immediately alarmed: several came around her bed: one or two exclaimed, 'No, she is not dead; it is only a fainting fit.' But it proved to be the crisis of dissolution—the moment of her glorious birth into a world where no sigh is heaved, no groan is heard, no tear is shed; and where the immortal inhabitant can suffer no painful separations.

"The required brevity of this memoir, intended only as an appendage to a funeral discourse, forbids its writer to expatiate on the numerous excellencies of character which the beloved deceased sustained. In the conjugal relation she was always tender, affectionate, and devotedly attentive to her husband; in the maternal, overflowing with love to her children, and ready to make any personal sacrifice for their well-being in both worlds; in the private walks of life, respectful and courteous to superiors, condescending and kind to inferiors, and ever prompt to relieve, to the utmost of her ability, the wants and woes of her fellow-creatures; and, as the wife of a minister, most considerate, prudent, sympathetic, and usefully active. Her friendly attachment to those whom she esteemed, as the faithful servants of Christ, was very strong; and among social pleasures none gratified her more than to see them at the table of her hospitality; and to mingle in conversation with them, on the state of their flocks, and the progress of religion in the world.

"She breathed a true missionary spirit; of which some judgment may be formed from the subjoined extract:—

"'*July* 21*st*, 1829.—Among the many spiritual advantages which I possess, in the situation in which a kind providence has placed me, one is, that I have so often the pleasure of enjoying the society of holy and eminent ministers of Christ: and, if my heart does not deceive me, I do greatly prize this privilege. This last week, however, has been to me one of the most interesting and impressive I ever enjoyed in my life. We accompanied dear Dr. Philip, and his wife and two daughters, down to Gravesend, to take leave of them, before they sail for the Cape. The evening on which we arrived (Thursday, 17th), we went with them to the house of God, and held a missionary meeting; and at the close committed the Christian company to Him who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand.

"'The next morning we met some more Christian friends at breakfast. The conversation was melting, and yet animating; and related to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. My husband engaged in prayer; and was so assisted and enlarged, as to produce a strong feeling; and, I think, none rose from their knees without weeping eyes. At about twelve at noon, we were joined by fourteen or fifteen more missionaries; some from France, and others from Germany, but all of one heart and mind. With them came many ministers, among whom were Mr. Orme, Mr. Arundel, Drs. Fletcher and Reed, Mr. James and Mr. Slatterie. Such conversation, prayers, and addresses, and such a genuine flow of Christian love, I never heard or witnessed before; and I hardly expect to see anything equal to it, on this side heaven.

"'The excitement has actually affected my bodily health, so that I am almost unfitted for the duties to which I have returned. Lord, I desire that the past scene may stir me up to holy inquiries, whether I am in the right way to that blessed world, where all thy saints shall meet again, and where missionary work will be needed no more; when the whole body of the ransomed of the Lord shall be brought from the north and south, the east and west, and sit down together in the kingdom of God.

"There shall our passions all be love,
And all our powers be praise."'

"Mrs. Clayton's visitors at her own house can testify to the animated joy which she felt, in receiving the refugees from Madagascar, in company with the Rev. Mr. Freeman, and while listening to his details of the history of the sable group, around whom were collected about forty of her Christian friends.

" On points of difference among Christian professors, she said that she was intentionally guarded in her conversation, as she thought that many let their tongues run a useless race, on this subject, and often got no valuable prize by it. She was, on principle, a Congregationalist; yet her disposition was most catholic towards all who hold the head, Christ. She often expressed a dislike to vehement and angry controversy, and avowed her determination to suppress, so far as she was able, that spirit and language, which she deemed particularly unbecoming in a Christian female; and by which the adherents of different denominations separate friends, undermine true charity, impede usefulness in the church, and present a repulsive edition of Christianity to the world.

" Perhaps her prejudices were too strong against those persons in whom she witnessed what she called 'heterodoxy of temper,' connected with matters of religion. The writer of these lines scarcely ever remembers her to have used anything like the language of strong censure, excepting when she discovered a bitter spirit in others towards fellow-Christians. One striking instance of this occurred at table, on a particular occasion. A certain person was dealing out his accusatory and acrimonious remarks very liberally around him; and turning to her, and, with an air and tone of rudeness, rebuking her for silence, said, 'Well, now I am determined to have your opinion.' She coolly replied, 'Why, sir, I had rather be excused from giving it.' He rejoined, 'But we must and will have it; for we live in times in which we ought to show our colours.' 'Well, sir,' she added, 'my opinion is this; that gentlemen had better keep their razors to shave their own faces; and not employ them to cut and slash everybody who does not think exactly as they do. I also think, sir, that Paul judged the same, when he said to Titus, "Put them in mind to speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."' Several pious friends are living who can confirm this statement; and who can recollect the effect produced on the whole company, by the sudden check thus given to the gratuitous exercise of uncharitableness.

"The papers which Mrs. Clayton has left behind her afford many striking exemplifications, not only of the spirit, but of the practice of her charity. As a lover of all the good, she secretly ministered of her substance to the necessitous, to whatever caste they belonged; and considering the limitation of her means,—more especially till within the last ten or fifteen years,—the extent of her silent liberalities to the poor, and her self-denial to communicate to some persons in particular, have excited much astonishment. She has often gone to her drawers, and when she could not find appropriate garments to give away to applicants, has disposed of articles of dress which she had not made up for herself, and parted with them to clothe the indigent.

"Yet, withal, such was her deep humility and sense of unworthiness, and such her extreme dislike of everything that had the aspect of flattery, that she could not bear to hear a word in her own praise; and on a late occasion, when, after an act of singular and ill-requited generosity, the sentence was quoted to her from the book of Proverbs—'Her husband, he praiseth her;' she exclaimed, 'In this world, my love, I wish to serve in the shade; in the next, I hope I may serve and shine.'

In short, her motto was, 'For me to live is Christ; and to die, gain.' During her earthly course, she well illustrated the first part of this interesting sentence; and now, having bid adieu to all the cares, conflicts, and imperfect satisfactions of this inferior scene, the author of this lowly sketch avows his full and consolatory persuasion, that she 'shines with the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.'"

Shortly after this, Mr. Clayton left Hackney, and went to reside at Romford, that he might be near his venerable father, and his only sister, Mrs. Johnson, who lived at Upminster. Through the facilities of transit, it required scarcely any additional expenditure of time, to reach London from Romford, than was formerly necessary in going thither from Hackney; while that distance from town secured him a greater freedom from the invasion of the quiet and retirement of his home, from which he could not obtain exemption when residing nearer the great city. Then, an incessant stream of callers—each one probably imagining that he was the only visitor for the day—made sad havoc with the hours devoted to study, or that ought to have been consecrated to domestic claims. By the change now effected his time became more at his own disposal.

With Mr. Clayton's thoroughly domesticated habits, the loss of the wife who had so long been his congenial companion could not but be deeply felt; and having arrived at a time of life when a man more than ever desires the endearments of the social circle, it is not to be wondered at, that, when a period of three years of widowerhood had elapsed, he contracted a second marriage, in June, 1843, with Mrs. Lloyd, a widow lady, residing at South Ockenden, in Essex.

Shortly after this, he began to consider the propriety of relinquishing his charge at the Poultry. The example of his father, which had been followed by the subsequent happy settlement of Mr. Binney, as his successor at the Weighhouse, had doubtless no small influence on him in coming to a determination. With all the reasons, by which his father's mind had been governed, he was familiar; and his own convictions being in perfect harmony with those of his venerable parent, he ventured to imitate his example. There were no indications of failing powers, other than those which sixty-five years naturally supplied; but before the increase of these should *compel* him to retire from the pastorate, and before any of his people should have occasion to consider it *desirable*, he resolved to relinquish it voluntarily.

On New Year's day, 1845, he sent the following note to his estimable deacons:—

"Dear Brethren,—On the first day in the new year, I convey to you my best wishes, that it may please the God of providence and grace to shower down the choicest favours on you and your families, 'from the beginning to the end thereof.'

"I have also to make a reference to a subject of very considerable importance, which has for some time past occupied my thoughts and my prayers. I did not purpose to allude to it till next April; but as the annunciation of my decision to *you* (made at present in perfect confidence) may be needful to guide or modify your movements, I beg to inform you that, if life be spared, it is my full and fixed determination to relinquish all pastoral responsibility at the Poultry chapel, on December 31st, 1845.

"At the same time, if required and expedient, I shall be most happy to render my beloved flock assistance, as their occasional preacher; and, by any means in my power, to facilitate the introduction and agency of an intelligent, faithful, catholic, and efficient minister, on whom the future election may fall.

"It is not needful, at present, to trouble you with the reasons of my prospective procedure, which, at the appropriate time, will be fully and openly given to my charge; but most earnestly praying that you, and the church and congregation, may be directed by heavenly wisdom in all your deliberations and proceedings, I remain, dear brethren, your attached friend, and faithful servant in the Gospel,

"JOHN CLAYTON."

This was followed, in a few days, by a *Letter to the Deacons and Members of the Church and Congregation assembling in the Poultry Chapel, London.* This was printed, and a second edition shortly afterwards sent forth. It was a very lengthened document; and some portions of it—when it fell into the hands of others, who did not belong to his flock—gave offence, on account of his references to the movements of a political nature, in connexion with Dissenters, of which he disapproved. As it explains his reasons for retiring, and may be regarded as a manifesto—explanatory of his motives for abstaining from appearing prominently before the public, in connexion with political matters, which towards the close of his ministry were widely and earnestly discussed,—I give several extracts from it.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—It has pleased the great Master whom I serve, to sustain me in ministerial labours, for above forty-five years; and though I have reason to be thankful for exemption from the painful pressure of corporeal infirmities, yet my period of life, while it should urge me to gratitude, humility, and confidence in God, tells me that I cannot reasonably look for a much more protracted competency for those exertions to which I have been long accustomed. O that a sense of past deficiencies, and of my increased liability to be summoned away by death, may prompt me to greater diligence to make my own calling and election sure, and to effect whatever I can achieve to promote the peace and prosperity of Zion!

"There is, however, a subject on which I have been anxious for some time past to communicate to you my thoughts. It relates to desirable changes in our Christian community. For not only do I find that I am not so capable of vigorous and continued movements, as in years which are fled, but there are other facts deserving sedate consideration, and which render a full compliance with the demands of my station altogether impracticable.

"One is the altered and dispersed state of our city congregations. Formerly, they were in a sort of ring fence, or parochial locality, so that, with some orderly arrangement, they were accessible, with comparative ease. Of late years they have been scattered, not only through the length and breadth of the metropolis, but in the surrounding suburbs. Up to the close of last year, we had members and attendants residing at Finchley, Hornsey, Highgate, Islington, Dalston, Newington, Hackney, Homerton, Bow, Stratford, Waltham Abbey, Enfield, Rotherhithe, Brixton, Peckham, and some other places equally remote. With strenuous effort, I kept up the plan of pastoral visitation and inspection for more than thirty years. This task I can now no longer execute, either to my own satisfaction, or the required advantage of the community.

"In the next place, our institutions, not one of which existed when our connexion was first formed, have become so numerous and so onerous, that they demand much more attention on the part of a pastor, than one who has long borne the burden and heat of the day can possibly give, consistently with other claims. Hearers in general are not aware of the extent of our engagements and responsibilities; but when you take into consideration the baptisms we have to administer at private houses, the funerals we have to attend, the sick and dying we have to see, the institutions we have to superintend, the candidates we have to examine, the countless visits to be received and paid on various matters of business, the correspondence we have to conduct, and the calls of the great societies in the metropolis which we cannot altogether decline,—to say nothing of our weekly preparations for the pulpit (no mean effort in these days in which we live),—I can assure you, we are kept on a full stretch of exertion, by which we are often almost overpowered.

"In the third place, I have observed that when large churches and congregations are subjected to the sudden disqualification, or the removal of their pastors, they are in danger of confusion, or of separation, unless some provision is made for the prospective emergency; and it is a desideratum, that such provision should be arranged, before the religious society languishes, or falls into that state of decay, from which it is very difficult to be recovered. . . . . . .

"I determine, then, to retire,—not from weariness, or disgust with my work, in which I still take delight; not to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*, which my principles would not sanction, nor my moderate means allow; not to assume the character of an officious spy on our own, or on any other denomination, to make a public report of the delinquencies of those who may have fallen into temptation; not to become an ecclesiastical or political incendiary, holding up a torch of flame and smoke and terror, or carrying about with me lucifers to fire the peaceful homesteads of my rural brethren, in whose wants and sorrows I have long and deeply sympathized; no, nor from any cooling of affection for those with whom I have walked in communion during the greater part of my life,—but from the fullest persuasion that I am no longer capable of fulfilling the duties of my extensive sphere, in the manner in which they ought to be performed; and from the ardent desire which I cherish, that my friends may be at the most perfect liberty to select an overseer, who shall effectively carry on the work which, through 'the tender mercy of God,' was so auspiciously commenced, and has been so happily sustained. Nor do I think that my Master in heaven will deny me the comparatively slight and short repose, which a humane earthly employer would give to one who had been nearly fifty years in his service.

"Yet it is not my wish to spend my possibly remaining days or years in listless indolence. There are many tranquil modes of usefulness which, owing to my voluntary and uniform absorption in my pastorate, I have never attempted, but in some of which, perhaps, I may embark. Often have I coveted the hundred hands of the fabled Briareus, that I might accomplish more for the cause of the Saviour, and for the interest of the souls He came to redeem. Full many a time have I envied that sweet goddess, who, from her cornucopia, is ever dispensing the blessings of plenty and peace. And if the days of darkness and extreme decrepitude do not await me, I would aspire, in one sense, to the distinction of the Jewish hero, of whom it is recorded that 'the dead which he slew at his death were more than they whom he slew in his life.'

"As I thus gradually dissolve my pastoral relation, I look back with penitential regret on many infirmities and deficiencies, which, however, it is better to confess to a merciful and pardoning God, than to talk of before the multitude. I daily feel it necessary to flee for refuge to the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of that Saviour who has been the chief theme of my ministry; on whose arm of strength I rely in the autumn of my life, as well as in the prospect of death; and in whose celestial fellowship I hope to spend a blissful eternity.

"There is one feature of my ministry, however, for which I have been often and most severely censured, to which I shall make a cursory reference, because I consider it to be closely connected with the general usefulness of the Christian pastor. The number of letters, chiefly anonymous, which I have received, on this and a few collateral subjects, is truly astonishing. I shall not copy the rude, sarcastic, and indignant style in which very many of them have been written, but coolly say to the writers, to whatever denomination they belong, 'Strike,' as hard and long as you please, 'but hear me.'

"Warmly attached as I am to the simplicity, freedom, elasticity, and useful tendency of a candid Nonconformity, yet my pulpit services have been conducted, as much as possible, with a cautious abstinence from everything like a party spirit. I have endeavoured to guard against bitter and vituperative remarks on the ecclesiastical polity of others; and have not given perpetual and irritating prominence to the subordinate points of difference subsisting among real Christians. Taking to myself the full right of private judgment, I have freely given it to all. I have had no sympathy with the temper of the intense denominational partisans of the day, but have studiously endeavoured to follow the things which make for peace and universal edification. Whatever may be my opinions on 'men and measures,' I have always kept them out of the pulpit; and thus have tried not to throw off my power to edify opposite parties, by putting into my hat the cockade, or wearing on my shoulders the epaulette of either. In the execution of my duties, as a minister of the Gospel of peace, I have completely cast into the shade Whigs, Tories, Radicals, Conservatives, and Destructives, and have been a 'total abstainer' from their agitations; being chiefly anxious that they might mourn for sin, and flee to Christ, and that 'by all means they might be saved.' My aim has been to avoid the political, which is only one form of a worldly, spirit; which has soured the temper, embittered the language, diverted the energies, obstructed the usefulness, and withered the prospects of some; or, to say the least, has wiped off the bloom and beauty of the sacred profession, with which the servant of the 'Prince of peace' should be habitually adorned. I have been a quiet, but not an inattentive observer of the signs in the ecclesiastical Zodiac. There are distinctly discernible, Aries and Taurus, Cancer and Leo, Scorpio, Capricornus and Sagittarius; but I am the subject of the most perfect conviction, that the fraternal association of Gemini, the charms of the charitable Virgo, the catholic equity of Libra, the gentle culture of Aquarius, and the soft gliding of Pisces through the roaring floods, will, in due time, effect those ends, which the horns, and paws, and bites, and sharp arrows of the others, will ultimately fail to accomplish.

"In the views which I entertain on this subject I have been abundantly confirmed, by marking the effects of an opposite mode of advocating what may appear to be truth. I have travelled, with 'open eyes and ears,' over numerous parts of my native land, and I have found scarcely any instances in which such a style of proceeding has wrought sober conviction, though possibly it may have established some in the opinions which they previously held; just as stormy winds will occasionally root trees faster in the earth. But I have witnessed many cases in which it has exasperated opponents, while it has conciliated none. It has repulsed, but not attracted. It has driven away from many of our country congregations, catholic friends, from other denominations, who were in the habit of contributing to the support of the dissenting minister, and the religious institutions of his congregation, and multiplied his privations by the serious diminution of his resources. It has restrained young persons of education and respectability from uniting themselves to our body, lest they should fling themselves on a bed of thorns. It has contributed to the retirement of not a few from the ranks of Nonconformity;—and it is a fact not unworthy of notice, that while those parents who have endeavoured to recommend their dissenting profession, by mingling with their denominational instructions the suavity of Christian candour, have seen their offspring rising up generous adherents to their religious caste; others, who have been always boring them with controversy, have been mortified by the spectacle of their sons and daughters renouncing their connexion, and even running into the preposterous absurdities and ruinous delusions of Anglo-Romanism.

"Above all, when I have studied the New Testament, I have not discovered any sanction for that *modus operandi,* which, however justifiable in the officers of the kingdoms of this world, I conscientiously disapprove in those who are devoted to the ministry of reconciliation. The conduct of our blessed Lord and His apostles furnishes me with no models, such as are supplied by some of our modern ministerial associations. The first heralds of that Gospel which proclaims peace to them that are nigh, and to them that are afar off, never linked themselves together in such forms of alliance. Gigantic and formidable as were the antagonists with whom they had to contend, both among Jews and Gentiles, they trusted to the weapons of a warfare which were not carnal but spiritual, to pull down the strongholds of idolatry and superstition. 'By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,' they sought to extend the victories of that cross, which is destined to subdue a rebellious world to God. I firmly believe that, if our entire body had adopted this procedure, Nonconformity, by its argumentative weight and moral power, would have acquired an ascendency, which it will now take many years to obtain.

"In short, who that addicts himself to a careful study of the entire ritual of piety, does not discover that all the forms of godliness are *only* forms, and are quite distinct from its power? Some are apparently more consistent with the sacred Scriptures than others; some are the offspring of human wisdom, or a legitimate expediency; but there is not any mode of church government which can be adopted, which does not combine both. Our business is to conform, as nearly as we can, to 'the pattern shown us in the mount;' but there are minor regulations in all our communities, for which we have no express command or example, in the Word of God. Yet, were it possible to frame an ecclesiastical polity of the most perfect order, its ordinances and sacraments would only be organs of transmission—mediums, or instruments of action, altogether impotent to the production of spiritual effects on the heart and character—a shell without a kernel, a body without a soul.

"But though I have inculcated this spirit, and humbly attempted to pursue this career, I can appeal to you, that I have not kept back our own distinctive principles. Witness my Course of Lectures, especially on the Acts of the Apostles, and the Seven Churches of Asia. Witness my discussion of denominational topics, in connexion with some signal events which have passed over us. Witness the appeals to the Legislature, which I have promoted on a variety of appropriate occasions. Testify whether I have not interwoven our peculiar views in the texture of very many of my discourses, in which they have appeared, as a good old divine says, 'not in lumps, but diffused through the whole cup which has been put into the hand:' while my principal and avowed effort has been, to exhibit our Nonconformity, as the companion of charity, and to overcome that which appeared to me to be error, by the manifestation of that which I believed to be truth: and I have yet to learn that it is a necessary proof of sincerity, or an evidence of moral courage, to pour forth vehement accusations against those who hold opinions different from our own.

"Whoever may be your future minister, my heart's desire and prayer are, that he may be one who shall contend earnestly for THE FAITH once delivered to the saints, and that he may recommend it to the embrace of all ranks and classes around him, by the benevolence of his spirit, as well as by the usefulness of his life; that he may ever bear in mind, that the servant of the Lord should be 'gentle towards all men, apt to teach, patient;' and that he may shun those angry conflicts about the externals of Christianity, which appear to me to be some of the heaviest obstructions to the conversion of mankind to God. Let him labour to make them sincere and eminent Christians; and impress them with the importance of daily appeals to 'the law and the testimony;' and he may rest satisfied that they will not move far from that part of the compass, towards which the truly magnetized needle will ultimately point. In essentials, may he be firm as the oak of the forest; in non-essentials, may he exhibit the graceful pliancy of the willow, which, to a certain extent, can bend with the breeze, and flow with the stream. . . . . . .

"In much fear and trembling I entered into your association, in the twenty-fifth year of my life. A devout and united band of fifteen or twenty disciples agreed together, touching that which they should ask of the Lord of the vineyard; and resolved to use every scriptural means to 'strengthen the things which remained, and which were ready to die.' They did not despise my youth. They had patience with me, and did not expect, in April, the produce of autumn. In a few years, 'the little one became a thousand;' and those results gradually followed, which have often called forth the acknowledgment, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'

"But I cannot close my short address, without offering you my cordial congratulations on the present state of our Christian society. The debt of above £12,000, on your chapel and schools, has been long since rolled away, by your liberal contributions. Your institutions, with one exception, flourish, and are regulated by harmonious superintendents and effective committees. Though your numbers are not so overflowing as in years past, yet your useful efficiency has been steadily increasing, and was never at a higher point than at this crisis. Your contributions to missionary causes alone have reached nearly £1,500, in the past twelve months, apart from the large amounts raised for other purposes. Your union, so far as I am aware, is as complete as can be expected in this world; or, at least, will only be surpassed in the millennial day. Your reputation, as a church, has not been sullied or impaired. Your influence has augmented, rather than decreased; and, judging from the testimony of unequivocal facts, you are not left without witness, that the labours of your minister have not been in vain.

"With me, a growing consciousness of unworthiness altogether excludes boasting; but most truly can I state, that I have served you, in my youth, my maturity, and my riper age, according to the best of my ability, and with a thorough devotedness of heart and action to your highest interests; quite content to forego the plaudits which, possibly, I might have gained, by some more popular forms of usefulness, that I might win your souls to Christ, and at last present you perfect in Him. I wish that I could adopt, with application to myself and my course, the whole of the descriptive statement which St. Paul supplies, in the impassioned appeal to the elders of the Ephesian church, when he bade them farewell;—a picture at which, however, when I look, I blush to think how faint and imperfect is my attempted resemblance. But I *can* affirm, that I have tried to 'declare to you the whole counsel of God.' I *can* assert, that by the space of 'forty years, I have not ceased to warn you night and day,' and often 'with tears.' I *can* say, that I have endeavoured to prove that 'I have not coveted your silver, or gold, or apparel; but have showed you, how that so labouring, you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.' And now, my beloved brethren and sisters, 'I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified.' If my physical strength begins to give way, my ardent attachment to you, my sense of obligation to many of you, for your steady regard,—from the novitiate to the close of my public career,—and my intense desires for your spiritual welfare, remain as fresh as ever, and put forth vigorous blossoms, as I pass into the winter of life. On the front of the glowing altar of my heart, is written this inscription—'O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever!'—I remain, your affectionate friend, and faithful servant in the Gospel,

"JOHN CLAYTON.

"CHAPEL HOUSE, POULTRY, *January*, 1845."

This communication from the pastor naturally led to gatherings and consultations among the people. That they did not imagine the vigour and efficiency of their beloved teacher's ministrations to be impaired, although he had passed the grand climacteric, was evident, from the earnest efforts they made to induce him to alter his determination. At a meeting, summoned for the purpose of considering the pastor's letter to the church, it was resolved by a formal, but earnest application, to request him to reconsider the matter. The letter that was written and sent by the deacons, in the name of their fellow-members, is an interesting document; expressive of the high estimate they entertained of their minister, and their sincere desire for the continuance of their mutual relationship.

"THE DEACONS AND MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING AT THE POULTRY CHAPEL, TO THEIR BELOVED PASTOR.

"POULTRY CHAPEL, *February* 6*th*, 1845.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—With emotions of the liveliest gratitude, mingled with the deepest regret, have we perused the affectionate letter you have just addressed to us.

"Considering, however, as we do, that it wears a most unfavourable aspect towards the continued peace and prosperity of this church and congregation, we have been earnest in our supplications, that our divine Master would, at the present juncture, bestow, both on the pastor and the flock, an enlarged measure of grace and wisdom; and that He would so direct us, that no step may be taken but such as shall tend to the promotion of His own glory, and to the advancement of our best interests.

"The communication of a purpose so important, pregnant, too, with injury, as it may be, to the cause of Christ here, has naturally been received by your attached people with the sincerest sorrow.

"It has pleased the Great Head of the church to continue your oversight of us, for so many years; and so greatly to bless your labours, to the enlargement of the church, and the edification of its members, that the very thought of a separation is most distressing to our feelings.

"For above forty years have some of us travelled with you through the wilderness, and we have felt that our bond of union was of no common order. An unbroken harmony has uniformly pervaded all our intercourse, and we had hoped that it was in your heart to have lived and died with us. Others amongst us have passed a longer or shorter portion of our lives under your highly-valued ministrations; and all are desirous of recording our gratitude to God for the unwearied diligence, the abundant labours, the disinterested sacrifices, and the elevated devotion, which He has enabled you to manifest—not only in your public, but in every private capacity—as the spiritual pastor, the faithful counsellor, the gentle monitor, the tender participator in our trials, and the ever-accessible and steady friend.

"To these gifts and graces, bestowed upon you, we are conscious that, under the blessing of God, our peace, unity, and prosperity, as a church, are mainly owing; and if you, our beloved pastor, say that you find occasion to 'look back with penitential regret on many infirmities and deficiencies, and to flee for refuge to the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of that Saviour, who has been the chief theme of your ministry,' what cause have we to be humbled, under so many and so great advantages, shared by so few, and excelled by none!

"Permit us, dear sir, most respectfully but earnestly, to invite you to a reconsideration of the various reasons which have conducted to a conclusion so unlooked for by us; and which, we would venture to hope, will not, on more deliberate consideration, commend itself, under the circumstances it would necessarily place us in, to your adoption.

"How many, and how powerful, are the arguments which might be adduced in favour of such reconsideration, in the review of the state of our Zion—with your energies of mind and body still unbroken; and so many encouraging circumstances existing among us,—in the efficient state of most of our institutions; and when the lambs of the flock—whom you baptized in infancy, or taught from their youth up, with others trained in our Sabbath schools—are coming forward, to declare what the Lord hath done for their souls.

"We presume not further to urge this delicate subject, than thus to give utterance to the emotions of our hearts. We wish to spread your letter before the Lord; and should He be pleased so to influence your mind, that our present relationship may be prolonged, we shall indeed hail the prospect with delight.

"We would not conclude, without expressing our entire concurrence in your catholic recommendation of Christian union; and the duty of forbearance towards those who differ in non-essentials, with a constant cultivation of the law of love; remembering the words of our blessed Lord, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples;' and fervently praying that we may be preserved from the least approach to an opposite spirit, we beg to subscribe ourselves, on behalf of the church,—yours very affectionately and respectfully,

"SAMUEL LEGG,
"SAMUEL HOUSTON."

To this letter Mr. Clayton sent the following reply:—

"TO SAMUEL LEGG AND SAMUEL HOUSTON, ESQUIRES.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I avail myself of the earliest opportunity which I can command, to acknowledge the receipt of the letter signed by you, on behalf of the church assembling in the Poultry chapel.

"Most sincerely do I reciprocate the expressions of affectionate attachment which it contains, and I shall proceed to answer it, I trust, in the same spirit which it breathes.

"The important subject to which your letter refers, has been deeply considered by me, for the past two years of my life; and while I join with you in grateful acknowledgments to the Great Head of the church for His smiles, which we have so long enjoyed, I will yield to none of my Christian friends, in the integrity and ardour of my wishes for the future peace and prosperity of the religious society with which we have for many years been connected.

"Forgive me, however, if I add that the step which I propose gradually to take, appears to me to be precisely *that* which is essentially necessary to perpetuate the flourishing state of our community. Your epistolary favour does not even touch the reasons which I have assigned for my procedure; and the request with which you have honoured me, neither repairs the decay of my physical strength, nor suggests means for the revival of that which droops, nor answers my objections to a collegiate charge.

"The mode in which I have proposed to execute my purpose, I humbly conceive, is free from anything abrupt, precipitate, or unkind; but your appeal to me does not in the least degree mitigate the pressure, which I find it impossible to bear.

"While, therefore, I am prepared, by divine permission, to do everything in my power to aid a minister of your choice, in his comfortable settlement, it is still my fixed intention, after carefully weighing the facts and arguments which bear upon our mutual relation, to relieve myself, as soon as Providence will allow, from all pastoral responsibilities. I hope, too, that after six and forty years of laborious service in the church, I shall not be considered as justly deserving censure, if I seek a little comparative repose, in the evening of my life.

"I will not now enter into any further detail. We shall ere long be called to hold a special church meeting; when I shall be quite ready to furnish you with a variety of statements, which will justify my entire proceeding.

"Earnestly praying that the Spirit of wisdom, holiness, and love, may guide you in all your deliberations; and requesting you to assure my beloved flock of my unabated affection and solicitude for their welfare, I remain, dear brethren, your faithful friend, and devoted servant in the Gospel,

"JOHN CLAYTON.

"6, ST. HELEN'S PLACE, *February 7th*, 1845."

In pursuance of this resolve he brought his pastoral labours at the Poultry chapel to a close, amid mutual expressions of love and attachment between the shepherd and his flock.

Before, however, he took a final leave of his people, he had the privilege of seeing them united together in the choice of a successor. The Rev. S. B. Bergne, then residing at Lincoln, was invited to the pastorate, which invitation he accepted in the spring of 1847; and continued there until 1853, when he succeeded the Rev. George Brown, as one of the secretaries of the Bible Society. He was followed, in 1854, by the Rev. Dr. Spence, who is still the esteemed minister of the congregation assembling in the Poultry.

When arrangements had been made for the settlement of Mr. Bergne, Mr. Clayton preached and printed three discourses which he had delivered to his old flock, under the title of *Welcome to Titus.* From this publication two extracts are appended; the first, an earnest appeal for prayer on the behalf of ministers, on account of the responsibilities and anxieties attendant upon their official position: the second presents us with the farewell utterances with which he parted from his people.

"Prayer for your ministers is both a just and kind return for their sacrifices, labours, and intercessions for you. It is touching on a tender and delicate point, when we speak of ourselves; but, surely, it will not be considered a trespass on propriety, if we suggest, that probably no small proportion of the trials which we are called upon to undergo, is the direct result of our having publicly embarked in your service. Possibly we might have passed quietly through society and life, at least with no other than common interruptions to our tranquillity; but it is for you, that we are exposed to the hatred and scorn of the world, and sometimes to its angry persecutions; for you, that we encounter many difficulties, and sustain the wear and tear of public life, so destructive to many of those calm satisfactions which you, in your privacy, enjoy.

"Nor is this the only view to be taken of the subject. Doubtless not a few of our afflictions are sent to increase our qualifications to sympathize with you, that we may speak a word in season to the heavily laden. In addition to which, we often yield up our edification to yours. In the hour of retirement, we should often gladly pursue some favourite theme of meditation, but we are restrained by a regard to your profit. In public we should be thankful to sit down in peace, and listen to the pleasant subjects of discussion, without any anxious excitement; but we must be prepared with some address, calculated to rouse the thoughtless, to pierce the hardened conscience, and to sound an alarm among those who are at ease in Zion. We are compelled to put a stress on our own feelings, that we may awaken an appropriate order of emotions in your bosoms, and preach so as to save them who hear us. Thus, as Paul says, 'We endure all things for the elect's sake;' and, surely, the least we can expect from you in return, is, that you will succour and uphold us by your prayers."

"Titus has come into the midst of you, under favourable circumstances. Though your numerical attendance has been somewhat diminished, yet look at what God has wrought! Located in the heart of the metropolis; on a tranquil site; in a noble sanctuary, completely relieved from the many thousand pounds of its debt; with a group of prosperous institutions, for the relief of want and misery, and the diffusion of the Gospel at home and abroad; and, above all, united in brotherly affection, and prayerful for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem, your field of usefulness is thrown open, and the skies overhead are bright.

"Amidst the strong emotions by which my mind is stirred, I cannot withhold an expression of my gratitude to the Great Head of the church, that He has permitted me to see this well-constructed vessel, with a fresh pilot and company of officers, and with numerous passengers, about to launch forth again on another voyage. May it be signally prosperous, until we shall arrive at the fairest of fair havens, in which, having bid adieu to the deceitful calms, and to stormy winds and waves, 'there shall be no more sea,' and sorrowful separations shall be for ever unknown!

"In a word, if, without impropriety, I may make one more slight reference to myself, in connexion with you and your interests, I will only add that, during my course of more than forty years in your service, I have, though amidst many lamentable deficiencies, heartily devoted myself to your welfare. Detaching myself, as much as was compatible with the numerous claims of a London sphere, from secular, and perhaps more exciting popular pursuits, I have readily sacrificed many of the pleasures derived from science, from the arts, and the charms of general society, that I might be *the pastor;* and count everything else but loss for Christ and your salvation. If I had any sparks of sacred fire in my youth, if any energy in the ministry of my manhood, if any mellowness in the discourses and the influence of my autumn and decline—all have been yours.

"True, the series of my regular labours among you is now brought to a final close; but suffer me to remind you that our responsibility remains; and we must all give an account of ourselves before God. Sinners! once more I warn you to 'flee from the wrath to come,' and repair to Jesus as the only hope set before you in the Gospel. Saints! 'This also I wish, even your perfection.' May the Spirit of the living God descend and abide on this hill of Zion! May your pastor be endowed with the richest gifts, adorned with the brightest graces, and shine as a star of magnitude and sweet influence, in this moral firmament! May he be clothed with righteousness, and his people shout aloud for joy, symphonious to the anthems of the heavenly choirs!

"Though my stated engagements among you terminate, yet I have one delightful reflection, that if I cannot serve as a vigorous labourer, I can still plead for you as a lowly supplicant; and when I pass into comparative retirement, this, in my best moments, shall be my fervent prayer: 'Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, MAKE YOU PERFECT in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!'"

A handsome testimonial was presented to Mr. Clayton some time after his retirement from his charge. "The pieces of plate consisted of an oval, pierced, arabesque-bordered engraven tea salver, with chased foliage handles and feet, with arms and inscription; two round waiters to correspond; and a richly-chased and superb inkstand." The inscription which the salver bears is as follows:—

"A tribute of affectionate respect, presented December 12th, 1848, by the church and congregation assembling at the Poultry chapel, London, to the Rev. John Clayton, M.A., on retiring from his charge, after a pastorate of more than forty years, in testimony of the sincere regard which they cherish for his private virtues, and his public worth; but more especially to mark their sense of his zeal and fidelity as a minister, and also his untiring assiduity as a pastor; which, under the divine blessing, were the means of recovering their Christian community, then worshipping in Camomile Street, from a state of extreme depression, to its present high standing among the churches of the metropolis: and they record with grateful recollection his active co-operation, and his generous sacrifices, when enlarged accommodation was required for increasing numbers, which mainly contributed to effect the erection of the Poultry chapel."

The presentation took place in private, at Mr. Clayton's own house at Worthing, whither he had gone to reside. After some prefatory remarks, made by the senior officer of the church, and a prayer offered by the Rev. S. B. Bergne, an address was read, to which Mr. Clayton responded as follows:—

"My Christian Friends,—When a disciple of Jesus Christ, on a memorable occasion, brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured its contents upon His person, some captious individuals were offended, and said, 'To what purpose is all this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.' But our Saviour, who looked at the motives and intentions of His faithful follower, vindicated and commended her action, and replied, 'Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me; for in that she hath poured this ointment upon my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.'

"Now it strikes me that a similar objection might be made to the procedure of this interesting hour; and that the costly and beautiful present, which you, gentlemen, as a deputation from my former flock, have placed before me, might have been devoted to more useful purposes than that to which it is applied. I am prepared most fully to concede this; but I am desirous to copy the example of our divine Master; and in His spirit I would gratefully accept the donation which you have brought, and which is so agreeably expressive of the sentiments and feelings of the Christian society, of which you are the representatives. It is the fragrant composition, by which my pastoral relation is embalmed on its interment; and its presentation will be reported to your honour, wherever the intelligence of your proceedings may be diffused.

"It would have been gratifying to me, on this pleasing occasion, to have indulged in an extended retrospect of our mutual connexion, during the past forty years; but you have done this in the touching address to which I have listened with impassioned emotions, and I have attempted it, in some discourses which I preached and published, when I bade you a friendly farewell. I shall therefore content myself with saying that, while I feel much on the review to humble me, under a sense of imperfections and deficiencies, we have ample cause for reciprocal congratulation, and for the exercise of gratitude to Him who is 'head over all things to the church.' Soon after our union, in the year 1805, we were favoured with His gracious and perceptible smiles. 'The little one became a thousand, and the small one a strong people.' By our united efforts we reared, at a large expense, that noble structure in the heart of the city, in which we conducted our worship, and you rose into one of the most conspicuous and flourishing churches in the metropolis. For a long season we enjoyed one even flow of religious prosperity. Various institutions sprung up among us into active efficiency. Though we lived in times when we were often surrounded by storms in the political, commercial, and ecclesiastical worlds, yet, like the bush at Horeb, enveloped in flames, we were unscorched and unconsumed. On the highway of our steady progress, 'no lion nor ravenous beast' was suffered to tread. Our harmony remained unbroken; and our co-operation in labours of love acquired constant accessions of strength. Full many a soul within the walls of our sanctuary was born to new life; and full many a tree of righteousness was transplanted from among us, to flourish in the celestial paradise of God. There, when the cares, the conflicts, and the imperfect pleasures of life shall have passed away, we hope to meet with many who were our companions on earth, to join their purer fellowship, and to mingle in the praises of Him 'who sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb.'

"To you, my respected brethren, and especially to my elder friends, connected with your religious society, I am deeply indebted for many tokens of kindness, for a series of years, which have long since rolled away. Receive, and express to them, in your own courteous manner, the assurance of my strong sense of obligation, for numerous displays of liberality, sympathy, and prompt readiness to carry into execution our various projects of usefulness; and for those patterns of piety, by which you have recommended to others the principles which you profess. I congratulate you on the proof which you have supplied, that, while habitually alive to the preservation of your rights and liberties, you could labour to maintain and enlarge them, without violation of Christian temper, or disturbance of the public tranquillity. On several very critical occasions, you have demonstrated the practicability of combining a jealous regard to rational freedom, with loyalty to our sovereign, and a just appreciation of our valuable constitution; and have openly shown that, amidst the extensive plantation of churches in the capital and its suburbs, Nonconformity need not be the pricking brier, but rather that it may bud and blossom, as the rose without a thorn.

"I cannot refrain from offering you my hearty gratulations upon two other subjects, intimately connected with your honour and welfare. The one relates to the cause and mode of our separation. It was not the effect of a mutual alienation of heart; not the result of heretical, political, or sectarian agitation and dispute; not the consequence of the wearing out, or breaking up of the religious interest at the Poultry chapel; nor a severance which took place after a very brief period of time had elapsed;—but after my ministrations had been conducted among you, during my youth, my manhood, and the greater part of the autumn of my life. It is only an act of justice to your character, and to the circumstances in which you were placed, when we bade each other adieu, to state that, in addition to the usual supplies, you raised for public institutions, in the year before we parted, an amount which surpassed that of any of the churches of our body in the kingdom; and that, although there was some diminution as to numerical attendance, in all other respects your position was such as to call forth thankfulness and praise. When physical weakness came upon me, by which I was disqualified for the due and vigorous performance of the duties of my weighty charge, divine Providence enabled me to retire; which I did in the exercise of the most perfect charity, and without proving the least burden to my flock, or an impediment to the revival and progressive advancement of your community.

"I rejoice with you also, that, after a comparatively short interval of fifteen months, your attention was directed to one who had for years proved himself to be 'a good and faithful servant' of Jesus Christ; whose ministerial talents, devout and catholic spirit, and energetic industry, give fair promise, if life be spared, of a course of usefulness, which will 'shine more and more to the perfect day.'

"While I undervalue not the splendid testimonial of which you, gentlemen, have been the conveyancers, yet, be assured that the sentiments which glow, and the spirit which breathes, in the document which accompanies it, are of far higher price, in my estimation, than ten thousands of gold and silver. The material substances are perishable, but the ethereal elements of our friendship are capable of everlasting duration; and will contribute to the strength and sweetness of an attachment which will give freshness to our social enjoyments in the winter of life, will survive the decays of age, and flourish beyond the tomb.

"Accept, gentlemen, my sincere thanks for your visit and its object; convey my best acknowledgments to my friends on your return, accompanied by my fervent prayers that you may long be spared in the enjoyment of every personal and domestic comfort; that the church to which you are allied may continue to prosper; and that our present association may be a type of our meeting in that 'better country' where painful separations shall be unknown."

The Rev. S. B. Bergne then offered an affectionate and fraternal address; Mr. Clayton closed the engagement with prayer and praise; and the deputation,—which, in addition to the new pastor, consisted of Samuel Houston, Robert Simpson, Eusebius Smith, John Radley, John Perry, and William Bateman, Esqs.,—after sharing his hospitality, amidst reciprocal expressions of friendship, returned to London.

Thus ended the official connexion between pastor and people, who had been united together, in hallowed and happy relationship, for upwards of forty years.

Chapter XXXIII.

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.—1835-1842.

ACCIDENT.—DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—SYMPTOMS OF FAILING STRENGTH.—DEATH OF HIS BROTHER.—SORROWFUL MUSINGS.—MRS. GEORGE CLAYTON: SKETCH OF HER LIFE AND CHARACTER: EARLY TRAINING.—CONVERSION.—MARRIAGE.—USEFULNESS.—YOUNG LADIES' CLASS.—EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.—SICKNESS.—DEATH.—EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS OF DR. PYE SMITH.

Perhaps the records of most men's lives, extending to more than threescore years and ten, would show that frequently they have been the objects of a special divine care and watchfulness, and have often been delivered from impending dangers, threatening life or limb. It was so with Mr. George Clayton, who was ever mindful of his obligations to his great Protector, and strove to learn the lesson which such events were designed to teach.

Late in the autumn of 1835, he and his family were staying at Brighton for a few weeks. Riding out on the downs, in company with his friend and deacon, Mr. White, he was thrown with violence from his horse. No limb was broken, but he was much bruised, and sustained injuries that necessitated abstinence from exciting duties for some time. In reference to this circumstance, he wrote in his diary thus:—

"Lord, show me for what cause, and to what end, Thou hast contended with me!

"It is not a little remarkable that we had, the night but one before this visitation, an alarm of fire in the house where we lodged. By some irregularity in burning the gas, at eleven o'clock the premises were threatened with conflagration. We were called up from our beds, and were putting ourselves in a posture for escape, when our divine Protector extinguished the flame, restored quietness, and indulged us with a night of safety and repose. Here, again, if we were not as 'brands plucked out of the burning,' that promise was literally fulfilled—'Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' O with what sentiments of gratitude and joy did I revisit my habitation, and bend my knee in the presence of my heavenly Preserver and divine Benefactor! Now, Lord, what shall I render? Behold, I do most solemnly, deliberately, cheerfully, irrevocably renew the dedication of myself and my all to thee. May I be the better as a man, as a Christian, as the head of a family, as a citizen, as a pastor and teacher in thy church, by reason of the things that have befallen me!"

In January, 1836, he was called, with the rest of his family, to mourn over the loss of his excellent mother, of whom he ever wrote and spoke with the utmost reverence and tenderness. Although, from her extreme age, the event could not be regarded by him as unexpected, yet filial affection felt keenly the sharpness of the pang of severance, when it did occur. To this he adverts in his journal, where he penned down the thoughts and sentiments which the bereavement had awakened.

"Among other blessings, it was not the least that my dear parents and their children, without exception, were permitted to meet together in the Christmas week, and on the last day but one of the year. And it was the last meeting we shall have on this side eternity. Already the parent trunk has been riven asunder; and my ever dear and most excellent mother has been called home. On the 11th day of January, at half-past six p.m., her waiting spirit was released. She has dropped the garment of the flesh, to put on the robes of light and immortality. To me, the trial being perfectly new, there has been such a rush of varied instincts, and overwhelming emotions, in my bosom, as cannot be described. One must feel, in order to know what it is to lose a parent; a mother, such as I have now resigned. I bless God, who made her to me and to my brothers and sisters—what she became, through the influence of the Holy Spirit—the parent of a new, a heavenly birth. I bless God, who spared her so long to her family, and to the world,—even for ninety years. I bless God, for her humble, holy, cheerful, blameless, and eminently useful course, and for her tranquil dismission, and almost unconscious departure from the body.

"It was yesterday, the 13th, that I visited her loved remains; stroked her clay-cold forehead; knelt by her coffin; and prayed that her God might be my God, for ever and ever, and my guide even unto death! We have lost not only a most wise and tender relative, but a powerful intercessor, and a bright example. O Lord, support, comfort, and preserve unto the end my widowed father. Let thy wisdom guide, thy love soothe, and thy grace uphold thy aged servant! Sanctify this event to our whole family; help us to cleave to thee, and to each other, to promote each other's highest welfare, and love and labour that we may meet at last, with all the faithful, in the unsuffering, undying kingdom of God our Saviour. Amen."

The time had at length arrived when the rich glow of early and mature manhood was gradually fading into the soberer gray of advancing years; and Mr. George Clayton was now about to be taught one of the hardest lessons a public man, who has been honoured with a long and prosperous career in the church, can possibly learn. In nothing did the nobleness of John the Baptist reveal itself more, than in his perfect readiness to retire from observation, when the Great Teacher of men appeared amongst them. "He must increase, but I must decrease." It requires no small amount of grace to say this, and to submit to it, without a sigh of dissatisfaction. A Christian pastor, who has for years gone before his flock, beloved, revered, deferred to, can hardly, with unruffled equanimity, contemplate the cessation of this close intercourse, or the advent of another person, who shall divide the attachment of his people, and draw off some of the affections which had been wont to centre on himself alone. In Mr. Clayton's case, a whole generation had passed away, since his settlement at Walworth; so that the ties which now bound pastor and flock together had been cemented by time, as well as by religion: the severance or weakening of such ties could scarcely be contemplated without a pang. Hundreds there had been baptized by his hands, and received by him into the church;—*their* children in turn had also been dedicated by him to God; and his heart clung to them with an affection which can only be understood by those who have sustained similar relationships, or by those who knew the genial warmth and tenderness of Mr. Clayton's heart. To leave them; or to be, only *in part*, what he had been for so long a time *altogether*, was, not unnaturally, something from which he shrank.

Yet in no action of his life, either in the anticipation of the event, or when it occurred, did he display more noble traits of character. The following extract from his diary, of the date of January, 1837, lays bare his whole heart to our view:—

"I do feel bound to my dear people by tenderest ties. I am sensibly touched when I leave them, but for a season; and I cannot be thankful enough for the degree of light, and peace, and love, which is found among them. I have many searchings of heart, when I feel, or think I do, some symptomatic failure of physical strength—some gentle intimations that I must decrease in vigour, in energy, and activity. I am indeed in a strait betwixt two; first, being perfectly willing to work up the last shred of existence, in the service of my blessed Master; and feeling, at the same moment, that the very willingness requires to be placed under discreet regulations.

"I greatly dread the thought of seeing the congregation grow languid or supine; and the more so, if such a state of things should be imputable, even in semblance only, to any of the irresistible influences of time upon the mental habits or physical powers of the minister. God has certainly wrought a great work for me, and by me, in this neighbourhood. There are many adversaries, as there always will be, wherever a wide and effectual door is opened. O how would they rejoice to see York Street deserted! York Street divided! A torrent of Church influence has set in against us, but it has been signally defeated. Two large churches raised in the parish, it was predicted, would swamp the dissenting meeting-houses! But no such effect has followed.

"I hope I can appeal to the Searcher of the heart, that it is no motive of vanity, or avarice, or ambition, but those impulses which spring from love to Christ, love to souls, love to truth, love to the principles of Protestant Nonconformity, by which I am urged to approach this very weighty and momentous question, of a colleague in my work. I love my work, my Master, my sphere; and am content, vastly more than content, nay, abundantly thankful, for all the circumstances of my position. Nor would I move or stir, till compelled to do so, but for the conviction that, when this necessity comes, it may be too late to have the thing rightfully, wisely, and calmly effected.

"He who seeks the good of Jerusalem—her peace and prosperity—must look forward; and endeavour by faith, by prayer, and prudence, to remove obstructions to the peace and prosperity of the Jerusalem he loves. This, then, is now the topic of all-absorbing interest and solicitude with me. I wish, I desire to deal with God, in the matter. It is between Him and me alone. I, a worm, and no man, come to the footstool of my father's God; the God of my covenant, the God to whom I am ministerially devoted; I come to tell Him, with adoring gratitude for the past, and with the confidence of perfect love, that I am willing to serve—anywhere, and in my best manner, and for any length of time He pleases—His redeemed flock.

"I have been thirty-five years in active and unceasing labour; and am not tired, nor do I seek inglorious repose; but I begin sometimes to feel faint; and I would have health, and youth, and piety, and talent called into the field, that two may help each other in the work of the Lord; gather in greater armfuls; bind fuller sheaves, and crown the Lord of the increase with a richer crown. I therefore now commit this affair to the Lord Christ; that I may be wise in His wisdom, strong in His might, and only live and move by His counsel, and to His glory. Speak, Lord, and I will hear. I shall now watch every breath of providence, and move or rest as Thou biddest. What a rich mercy would it be to see Jerusalem a quiet, prosperous habitation, ere the days of darkness come upon me, and ere the going down of the sun!"

Mr. Clayton was now to become familiar with afflictive visitations. The footsteps of the destroyer were to be heard near his dwelling with solemn frequency; and whispers from the spirit-land, floating around him, warned him to set his house in order. A sickness, extending over eleven weeks, visited him in the summer of 1837, and entirely prevented him from attending to his ministerial duties. But in the autumn he was restored to health; and returned to his post with renewed earnestness of soul.

A few months rolled by, and once more the angel of Death entered within the family circle, to summon away one of its members—the youngest of the fraternal band. To see those, who had set out in the journey of life long before him, vanish from his vision, was nothing surprising, however painful might be the bereavement. But to find those who were his juniors pass off the stage of earthly existence, while he remained a spectator of their departure, was what he had not anticipated.

One of the greatest trials of his life befell him, when his youngest and much-loved brother, William, was suddenly snatched away from the midst of a large and attached circle of friends. He pours out his heart in the most touching expressions of tenderness and sorrow. The whole strain rings like the breaking of a harp-string. It is David lamenting over Jonathan. "Very pleasant" had the slain one been to the weeping survivor—his love had been tender and pure as that of woman. Thus the grieved one records his emotions:—

"It has pleased the Lord of my life and the Author of all my mercies to lengthen out my existence, and to permit me to witness another anniversary of the day of my birth. Never before have I passed a birthday under circumstances of equal sorrow. My dearest brother William never failed to meet this day with the heartiest congratulations, and kindest wishes of fraternal love; but now the hand which wielded his affectionate pen is cold and motionless in the dust. That countenance, which beamed with confidence and gladness, is hidden in the grave; and that tongue, which gave utterance to the tenderest emotions of friendship, is silent in death.

"Alas! alas! my brother, I am distressed; not for thee, but for those whom thou hast left behind, to mourn their irreparable loss. Ah me, my brother! thou hast been snatched away from those who loved and delighted in thee; and I am left to pursue my journey, as it were, in comparative solitude. For though much remains to me, of which I am utterly unworthy, yet much, very much, has been subtracted from my social joy and felicity, by thy glorious translation to the regions of light. But I dare not repine; thou art perfectly holy and happy; and this, in the midst of sorrow, shall bring joy to my heart.

"May I be like thee, in all that was like thy blessed Master, into whose joy and glory thou hast entered! Let me look back with gratitude upon the years of help, pleasure, and sacred solace, I knew in thy society; and let me adore and give praise to God, whose grace made thee what thou wast to me; and seek my all in Jesus, whom thou lovedst and servedst on earth, and with whom thou reignest in heaven. Let not my tears obscure my mercies; or hinder me from sending forth my grateful ascriptions to Him who has spared a sinful worm, less fit to depart, less meet than thou for the inheritance of the saints in light.

"O that on this day I may resolve, with all my heart, on a new and more entire consecration of my life, my all to God. Let me be more diligent, cautious, circumspect, and prayerful; and seek a larger measure of the Spirit's grace to sanctify me wholly; to preserve me to the end; and to make me a more abundant blessing to my family, my church, and the world! O for a renewed application of the blood of sprinkling; that, with a sense of pardoned sin, I may pursue my course, hold on my way, wait all the days of my appointed time, and finish my short day of life to the glory of my God and Saviour!

"*April 9th*, 1838."

In the summer of 1842, Mr. Clayton and his wife journeyed to Brighton, for a temporary sojourn there. The latter appeared in her usual health and spirits—the fresh air of the country, and the invigorating breezes of the sea, seemed to give new life to her delicate frame. But, after four days, she was seized with illness, while staying at the house of the Rev. J. Sortain. This illness increased upon her rapidly, and reduced her to a state of distressing weakness. Everything was done, that human agency could accomplish, to arrest the progress of the disease; but without effect. From the beginning she had a presentiment that this sickness would be unto death; and composed herself with wondrous self-possession in the exercises of contrition, faith, and prayer, to meet her last hour.

This will be the proper place for a short notice of this estimable lady, who, for nearly thirty-eight years, had been the companion and coadjutor of her husband, in his great work.

Mrs. George Clayton,* who was born in 1779, was the only child of Burchett Whennell, Esq., then residing at Aveley, in Essex. She was of a good family; General Oglethorpe, of Cranham Hall, and Sir Nathan Wright, Bart., a soldier distinguished by his loyalty and devotion to the house of Stuart, being among her maternal ancestors.

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* For these particulars concerning Mrs. Clayton, I am mainly indebted to a short Memoir of her, published by the Rev. Joseph Sortain, in 1844.

In her infancy she was visited with a sudden loss of power in the right limb, the effect of slight paralysis. All that medical skill could devise failed to neutralize the evil. But as her mind developed, it gave indications of a robustness and intelligence, in happy contrast with her physical weakness. In her eighth year she was placed at school, at Reading; and, in 1790, was sent to one at Great Baddow, where she found herself in the midst of sixty scholars. Here her reading embraced a wide range of literature; the classical authors of other lands, as well as those of her own, being her favourites. In her autobiography she says:—

> "When Miss More's *Treatise on Education* was published, I read it diligently, but could not enter into the last chapter of either volume. By the recommendation of this writer, I determined to read Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*. Never was I more captivated by a book! It introduced me into a new intellectual region. I regretted that I had wasted so much time in reading novels; and determined to discard them for the future, as I now heartily despised them. This resolution I was enabled to keep."

While at Reading, Mr. Cadogan's preaching produced in her mind the first awakenings of a sense of the evil of sin; but they were met by the opposition of her unregenerate nature; and when, at different times, she was brought to listen to a faithful evangelical ministry, which she did not find where her parents worshipped, it seems only to have excited afresh the latent hostility of the unchanged heart.

In 1794, she left school, and spent some time in town; where she contracted a taste for dramatic representations, which were her ruling passion for four years. Tired at length of novels and light literature, in which she had indulged, she gave herself to the perusal of works calculated more to improve her mind. Bishop Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* became a prime favourite :—

"I entered," she says, "into his austere and legal views with great zest; retired at the prescribed hours for secret prayer, —using the prayers of Bishop Andrews—with great constancy. This, however, only lasted while I was at home. When I visited London, I was ensnared by its pleasures, and absorbed in the pursuit of them. I read Plato's *Dialogues*, and, as if I had never heard of a revelation from God, nor seen a Bible, I was thrown into the greatest perplexity, as to the nature and existence of the Supreme Being, and the way of acceptance with Him. Under deep anxiety of mind did I grope in darkness, while the effulgent beams of divine truth were shed around me; but I had no spiritual light to behold them."

It was shortly after this that a young minister from college—her future husband—was introduced to her. In a small private circle, he read the account of Moses, given in Robinson's *Scripture Characters*, and at once a new light broke in upon her. She saw that if God was to be pleased, the world must be renounced; and she resolved to do it. Her own words, written long afterwards, will best state this :—

"On this day, 1802, I was first introduced to ——. On this day, the arrows of conviction first pained my heart; I saw what was to be given up for Christ; I was made willing to accept the terms of the Gospel. How much have I been a *gainer* by my *losses!* How true is that divine word: 'No man hath forsaken lands, or houses,' &c. I would set my seal to the truth of the promise. I have waded through a sea of affliction, since I first set out in the Christian course; but never have I repented; never, through the grace of my Lord, cast a lingering look on the world which I have quitted. Thus far have I persevered, though with unequal, and sometimes faltering steps. I now look forward to the prize, and can say, truly, that I despise all that earth can offer. O that I could more steadfastly believe that He, that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely give us all things!"

From this time her chosen preachers were of the evangelical school, for which, up to this period, she had entertained the bitterest contempt. But now the Rev. John Newton, the Rev. Thomas Scott, the commentator, Dr. Waugh, and others, were listened to with delight. This change, however, exposed her to the opposition of her parents, who had cared for none of these things, and to the official remonstrances of their parish clergyman. But she maintained her position with calmness, dignity, and success. The very difficulties by which she was beset. led her more closely to examine her own heart, and consider well those truths, for which she had to endure the frowns of friends; and the result was a firmer attachment to them, from a conviction of their scripturalness and worth.

It was at this time she formed an engagement with Mr. Clayton, which ultimately issued in their marriage. But before this event could take place, she had to pass through deep waters; and by a stern mental discipline, to which her divine Master subjected her, be qualified for the position of a minister's wife, who would often be called upon to "speak a word in season to those who are weary;" and must "know how" to do it, from a remembrance of her own experience. Referring to this, she says:—

"During a visit in town, I was seized with the influenza: the attack was violent, and my frame much debilitated by it. I continued for four months in a state of great bodily weakness. My mind became unstrung; a nervous depression settled on my spirits; I lost all my comfort; nay, even hope itself was lost. I could not pray, nor read the Scriptures, nor endure to be present at religious services,—the tempter persuading me that my sacrifices were an abomination in the sight of God, and would only tend to enhance my condemnation. I could not open my lips to any who were competent to enter into my case, or afford me consolation, from an apprehension that they would charge me with hypocrisy; and as I judged myself to be indeed a hypocrite, I gave myself up for lost. For six months I remained in the deepest despair, assaulted by the most fearful temptations, and the prey of the most fearful imaginings. It pleased God, however, by restoring my health, to calm my mind. And though, for many months after, I enjoyed not a ray of comfort, yet I was enabled to attend to the duties of religion, as it respected external worship."

Reference has already been made to the trying circumstances which preceded her marriage with Mr. Clayton. But the opposition of her friends was at length overcome; and she entered upon her new sphere of service for God, with a devout desire to glorify Him, whose she was.

Her first care was over her own heart; and systematically she strove to instruct and discipline it. Scrupulously attentive to her private devotions, she drew up for herself a series of "Reflections on the opening of the day, by way of preparation for the solemn exercise of prayer." For the evening, she instituted a number of searching inquiries into the spirit, and temper, and manner in which the day's engagements had been observed; that she might have topics for reflection, and subjects which should induce becoming emotions of penitence or thankfulness, at the throne of grace.

She arranged her devotions for each day of the week, according to a special plan, and ever made meditation precede prayer; "remembering that as the mind is *musing* the fire burns; and so, ere she spake to God with her tongue, she pondered in silence over the subject of her petitions."

Among her papers was found "A solemn Covenant with Almighty God, made through His beloved Son Jesus Christ, and by the aid of His Holy Spirit; to be frequently reviewed." That covenant she sought daily to keep; and by the help of God, amid many conscious defects, she remained faithful to it.

Mrs. Clayton was, amidst all her engagements, a great reader. She kept a catalogue of those books which she read from 1788 to 1841.

> "It would seem that immediately upon her having concluded a volume, she herein recorded it. The works thus studied are classified under the heads of Divinity, History, Biography, Poetry, Travels, and Natural History and Philosophy. To these is added a large number of books which defied arrangement. When it is recollected that her meditative habits made her what might be called a slow reader;—that the moment a work betrayed its worthlessness, she threw it aside, and omitted to record it in this catalogue;—that nevertheless, of books which she had thoroughly studied, on the truths of which she had ruminated, thus converting them into pabulum for her mind, there were 16 folios, 58 quartos, 1,118 octavos, and 241 duodecimos; making in the whole 1,433;—her mental industry will surprise, and should arouse to emulation. . . . Hers could not have been a contracted mind, seeing that it was familiar with the rich tomes of Bishops Hall and Taylor; the sublime Christian philosophy of Howe; the varied literature and theology of Watts. Hers could not have been a weak mind, seeing that it had held converse with Plato, and Seneca, and Bacon, and Locke, and Butler, and Berkeley. To commune with them, and to respond to them, showed power.

Hers could not have been an unattuned mind, seeing that it had listened, as

> 'Our sweetest Shakspeare, fancy's child,
> Warbled his native wood-notes wild;'

had heard, in awe and reverence, the deep diapason of Milton; and had caught the mystic whisperings of Wordsworth. Indeed, it was a refreshing thing to watch her; to know the profound and conscientious piety of her heart; to be aware that its delicacy was such that, like the mimosa, it shrunk at the bare touch of evil; and yet to perceive that, instead of sympathizing with the religious prudery around her, she found it morally healthful to live with the wise of all ages, and to hearken to genius, as to the inspiration of the Most High."*

But it is not to be supposed that there was any omission of domestic or social duties, on account of these intellectual pursuits. It is sometimes alleged that the love of literature and a true domesticity are rarely combined. It may be that individual cases can be found of absorption in study to the neglect of home duties; but there is no necessary disconnexion between these things; and a rightly-regulated mind, such as Mrs. Clayton's was, will ever take care that each receives its due amount of time and attention.

It is certain that she was deeply interested in the success of the various societies affiliated with the York Street congregation, and, as she had opportunity and strength, aided in their working. Her chief interest, however, centred in a charity school of girls, which she established in 1810, and over which she watched with parental solicitude, for thirty-two years. During the whole of that time she wrote the reports that were annually presented to the subscribers, and strove in a variety of ways to multiply its friends and supporters.

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* Sortain's Memoir.

But that which was most noticeable was the healthy influence, of an intellectual and spiritual character, which she exercised over a large number of her own sex. The value of this it would not be easy to exaggerate; while its important results can never be fully ascertained, until the disclosures of the last day shall reveal the nature and extent of holy incentive, which a vigorous, refined, and sanctified mind can give to those who come within the sphere of its action.

Mrs. Clayton was in the habit of meeting, at stated times, with the young ladies of the families worshipping at York Street; "when topics selected from subjects which bore upon the mental and spiritual culture of females were discussed, in the easiest and most informal manner; and when, as if one of themselves,—as a learner, not an instructress; as a companion, not a senior,—she would avail herself of her extensive reading and experience. One of that number, who shared, more than most, her affections and interest, thus writes of her, in a strain in which all the rest would, I am sure, cordially acquiesce:—

"'I can scarcely yet realize that we shall see no more, or commune with, this beloved friend. She stood out to the eye of my early youth, as a pillar of mental rectitude and moral worth, whose fair outline time never dimmed. I know no one who, for so long-continued a term of years, maintained such a strong and yet affectionate influence over me, for good. Her cast of mind was so calm, lucid, and reflective; she was such an eminent Christian; viewing all things by the light of another world, and setting so little store by the glitter of this. She appreciated talent, but it never dazzled her, or even won her admiration, unless used in God's service. She really loved the beautiful in nature, and felt the powerful in art. Her society, in free and intimate intercourse, was always elevating. She was a truly refined and spiritually-minded woman. She is gone, after fulfilling her allotted period of probation and usefulness on earth, to the land where such spirits dwell.

> '"Heaven gives us friends to bless the present life:
> Removes them to prepare us for the next.

"'For the maintenance of this variety of social intercourse she was, with one exception, singularly fitted. Though decided in her opinions, and conscious, as she must have been, of great mental vigour, she was, nevertheless, I am convinced, timid and diffident. The direct result of these peculiarities was a reserve, which the superficial or malicious might have called pride. But the moment that this timidity and diffidence gave way to an intimate acquaintanceship, her manner became irresistibly attractive, from its confidingness and candour. Her repartee, which often approached to wit, enlivened the gravest subjects. If it ever wounded, its barb, beforehand, had been steeped in a balm. Her discussions on individual character always interested the best feelings of her associates; for they held a happy medium between what would have been meaninglessly general, or unkindly specific. Sometimes her manner lost its ordinary placidity, and her voice quivered with emotion; her thoughts breathed, and her words burned; and then her invective, which was never, to my knowledge, against men, was eloquent against measures. Hence, her influence upon public men, in stirring them up to the advocacy of great human rights, was often most decisive.'"*

A few quotations from Mr. Sortain's *Extracts from her Correspondence* will give a slight idea of the discursive character of her reading, her keen perceptions of men and things, and of the vigour with which she could wield her pen.

"CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.—Every day I endeavour to push the world from me, and inquire, what of its causes, and pursuits, and enjoyments, can be dispensed with?—that I may be more entirely devoted. But, alas! when the nightly review is instituted, nothing seems to have been either renounced, on the one hand, or accomplished, on the other. 'To will is present, but how to perform I find not.' Do you know what it is to feel as if you made no progress in the celestial journey?—to have the same spiritual prospect continually before your eyes?—contending with the same enemies; encountering the same temptations; committing the same sins every day, as if you never moved a step onward, in the path of Zion? That is my experience. Did I not retain a vivid recollection of the broad road, and the motives which impelled me along its course, I should sometimes doubt whether I had entered on the heavenly way. But, no! it cannot be mistaken: it is narrow, and thickly strewn with thorns and briers, on the one side; while, on the other, the flowers and fruits of paradise offer themselves in rich abundance to the weary traveller."

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* Memoir.

"JONATHAN EDWARDS.—I thank you for introducing Edwards to me. I find his work on religious affections profitable. I like him for his sober-mindedness. There is much that is cautious and discriminating in his delineation of spiritual feeling, and an ample exposure of what is spurious and counterfeit. What an admirable quotation is that from Mr. John Smith, on Pharisaic righteousness, page 117. It is very pleasant, occasionally, to climb the dazzling height, where fancy, waving her magic wand, exhibits the glories of her unreal world to the astonished gaze; or roaming in the labyrinth of metaphysic lore, to listen to the sage, profound, and erudite, who, discoursing of that subtle essence, mind, shall investigate its powers, analyze its perceptions, and trace its actings. But it is safest and best to walk in the good old path, where the light of Scripture, the evidence of faith, the deductions of corrected reason, and the harmony of subjugated passion, combine to assure us that it is the King's highway, and will certainly conduct us to the celestial paradise.

"In lately meditating on the intermediate state, I have been led to think that it is as remote from the refinement of intellectuality, as from the grossness of materiality. I am inclined to the opinion, expressed on Saturday evening,—that consciousness and the moral sense will be the all-pervading impression, and only perception of the spirit. Judgment will be past; memory will probably be in exercise; but imagination, and the discursive faculty, held as it were in abeyance, till the soul is united to the glorified body, when the various mental faculties may find a slightly analogous employment in the new theatre of human activity. What is your prevailing idea of heaven? Is it as a state of individual felicity, or social enjoyment; or as a beatific absorption in the contemplation of the divine nature? I perceive that Edwards answers my query concerning mental intercourse negatively: 'Spirits united to bodies have no medium of acting, as it respects other creatures but the body.' So it is not only the instrument and the habitation, but the prison of the soul. But, thanks to Heaven, written speech can fly whither spirit cannot; and convey its thoughts, feelings, and wishes."

"NERVOUS AFFECTIONS.—You ask if I have experienced the feelings you describe? I am well acquainted with many forms of that hydra—nervous disease; and to the wild workings of a morbid fancy I am no stranger. The various undefined and undefinable ills, the fearful apprehensions which it conjures up, and the false surmises in which it indulges—these I also know. With regard to physical suffering, I acquired at an early age (14), from my first moral master, Seneca, some control over animal feeling; and a capacity of endurance, which comes nearer to the idea of passive power than anything else which I can conceive of.

"This, I hope, has improved in a higher school. When suffering pain, I generally retire within myself, and pray, and endure, and strive to perfect patience—which I invariably find the best anodyne. By this means I can lie still, almost motionless, when the slightest sound beats with distressing violence on the diseased sensorium, and the least movement of another is painful and annoying.

"I find it easier to reason with nerves and muscles than with imaginary terrors. I think the dominion of mind over matter would be apparent, if the first ten years of human life were spent on subjugating the animal, and cultivating the moral powers, instead of forming the intellectual. How much is effected this way by the Moravians and the Friends! Abstinence from stimulants, during the entire period of youth, would, I think, also contribute to this end. But, leaving the physical view of the subject, we know that our God, who is rich in mercy towards them that fear Him, will not lay upon us more than He will enable us to bear. He will give dying grace in dying moments."

"Classics.—Dear —— has been most assiduous in her attentions during my illness, and visited me three or four times every week. We have had a whole Iliad of battles on the subject of the classics; but no Homer to recount them, for the amusement of future ages. She insists that, if the classics were abolished, taste would be extinct; whereas, I contend that a most elegant philosophic mythology might be built on the discoveries of modern science; one that would excite the imagination, without stimulating the passions. What lovely forms might be conceived to bask in the soft rays of polarized light, reflecting prismatic hues from their gauzy wings! What wondrous beings might be supposed to direct electro-magnetic influence, and produce chemical transformations! What a variety of personifications might be employed to control the forces which act on the material world around us; and what sublime intelligences, to preside over the sidereal movements!

"But is mythology necessary, either for taste or poetry? Were the youthful mind no longer corrupted by the baleful streams which flow from Castalia's polluted fount, the soft flowing waters of 'Siloa' would attract them, and the dews of Hermon impearl their brows. Surely, the terrors of Sinai, the glories of Tabor, and the more thrilling words, as revealed to the lone inhabitant of Patmos' isle, would furnish loftier themes than Empyrean Jove and 'his rabble rout' of inferior deities would ever inspire! . . I have not forgotten your favourite Longinus. He reminded me of a fine tract of country diversified with mountain scenery and fertile plains, while, ever and anon, a bog or slough betrays the feet of the unwary travellers, and annoys those who love to walk in clean paths."

"THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.—Laymen cannot form any just conceptions of the labour of making sermons. They do not calculate on the deep thought, the patient research, the discriminating judgment, the chastised imagination, the fervour of devout affection, which should be employed in every preparation for the pulpit. Or, if from habits of mental application, they can form some estimate of these, yet it is impossible that they should realize the solemn feelings, the melting emotions, the painful searchings of heart, the fearful forebodings of those who, in the true spirit of their office, stand up between the living and the dead, as the messengers of God, as the ambassadors of Christ; knowing that no argument, no warning, no appeal from their lips, is without its effect. It is either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death! Who is sufficient for these things? They filled the Saviour's heart: they would fill an angel's hands.

"But persons in general have very inadequate ideas on the subject. The merchant thinks it as easy to write a sermon as a letter of business; the tradesman, as to cast an account; and some, probably, think with the countryman, that it comes by nature—like reading and writing. Inconsideration is one source of this misconception; but there is a yet more culpable one; —religion has too little influence upon the heart: we are too little conversant with awful realities. The minister's voice is to many but as a lovely song, which charms the ear, and dies away from the mind.

"I love the priesthood, and I must stand up for its defence while I can wield the pen."

Throughout her life Mrs. George Clayton had often been the subject of bodily affliction; while her domestic sorrow—to which reference has already been made—bowed her heart very often to the dust. But amidst it all the meekness of the Christian shone forth beautifully. No murmur was heard; but a holy acquiescence in the appointment of the all-wise God was ever visible.

When her last days approached, and she found that she had left her earthly home to die in that of another, she prepared herself for the event.

Mr. Clayton furnished some minutes of a conversation held with his wife, on her deathbed, from which I extract the following:—

"She appeared to labour under considerable difficulty and embarrassment, in uttering that which she nevertheless was anxious to communicate. At length she said, 'I wished to speak to you on the state of my mind; I intended to do so yesterday, but was prevented. I hope this illness will be a great blessing to me. For some time past I have mourned over great darkness and distance from God; such coldness of heart, such want of sensible comfort! I am full of fear in relation to the time to come; lest I should become helpless, and useless, and a burden. But why should I look forward to the morrow, when I have so many mercies, innumerable mercies, for the present day! I want more submission to the will of God. I want an increase of faith. "Lord, increase my faith." This must be henceforth my motto—"Only believe." I have, alas! read too much, and prayed too little; I have read many books which might have been better left alone. Yet I really did it often with a view to the good of the young people; to the improvement of their minds.'

"I reminded her that the cultivation of the understanding is a duty, and that in an age of information it was as well to keep up to some extent with the advancement of knowledge. 'Ah!' she replied, 'the knowledge of Christ is the one thing—the everything.

"To know my Jesus crucified,
By far excels all things beside."

It is well,' she continued, 'that I have been called aside from the incessant round of duties, too formally discharged,—not neglected, but with so little of the heart in them. O that I had read less in my private hours of devotion, and meditated more! Meditation, communing with our own hearts, is the thing to be especially aimed at.'

"Then, with much emotion, she repeated a favourite verse—

'Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there—
Some sure support against despair.'

"I reminded her that that was a favourite verse of my dear mother's, and that she had never taken higher ground, in her religious experience. She smiled and said, 'How low, then, ought I to place myself!' She complained of pride; 'How much I have had of it! How God has been humbling me for it, all along;

"But pride—that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform."'

"She asked if I thought that 'a soul, which sincerely loved Christ, or that sincerely desired to love Him, could perish?' I answered, 'Certainly not; it is incongruous and impossible.' She added, 'I do sincerely desire to love Him. Of one thing I am certain, that I desire holiness above all things; a holy heaven, and nothing else. I sometimes hope that this may be regarded as an evidence of grace.'"

She sent messages to the people at Walworth,—"her dear people, with her best love, and hope to meet them in heaven, if they never met again on earth." Gloomy thoughts at times oppressed her, but they gradually passed away; and at length, the tired one sunk to a sweet repose. Mrs. Clayton died August 13th, 1842, aged sixty-three years.

An extract, from Dr. Pye Smith's oration at the grave, will close this sketch:—

"Our departed sister was by God formed, naturally, and in the arrangements of His providence, to attract universal admiration and love. I well remember, in the commencement of her course, it being said by one who was a good judge of human nature, 'She is all intellect.' Her fine understanding, her penetration, her vivacity, had she chosen to take her lot in the world, would have made her the ornament of the most brilliant circle. But she chose to take her lot with the people of God;

and to consecrate her natural and acquired talents of mind, in every respect, to the honour of the Redeemer; and you know (though you can but imperfectly know) the simplicity, the humility, the self-renunciation, the abdication of human applause, with which she habitually laboured to promote the love and honour of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As 'the beloved Persis' 'laboured much in the Lord,' so do you know—you, the members of the church of Christ, under the pastoral care of my dear brother—that she infused life and energy into numerous associations; and that yet, with all this vivacity, there was feminine sweetness, and softness, and tenderness, and everything that exhibited always an anxiety that not she, but the grace of the Lord, should be contemplated.

"While she thus wrought, in every part of the circle she had filled, domestic and private, as well as when brought forth into a measure of public knowledge, she left no duty—I may say, without any exaggeration, so far as the human eye could see—she left no duty neglected. Order; exact, wise, and beneficent adjustment of time and circumstances, showed that she possessed what is the mark of a great mind—comprehension; and an ability to combine attention to the greatest, with a dignified, yet affectionate arrangement of the smallest, affairs. But whilst thus our departed sister 'was as an angel of God' walking the earth, attracting love and admiration, or scattering blessings around, her spirit habitually held communion with the Infinite and the All Perfect; and thence she drew the vital power which animated the whole of her character.

"Yes, that vital power was union to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ was the centre and the energy of all that lovely, and active, and useful character, which it is a delight to survey. I may apply to her, without any impropriety, an epitaph which stands in one of the churches in Westphalia,—'What things were gain, those I counted loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.' So thought, so felt, so lived, the Princess Amelia Galitzin; so thought, so felt, so lived, Mary Clayton. It is true, it is true, without any exaggeration."

Chapter XXIV.

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.—1843-1862.

SECOND MARRIAGE.—ILLNESS.—CO-PASTORATE.—REV. P. J. TURQUAND.—LETTER TO MRS. WILLS.—FÊTE AT GAINES.—PRESENTATION OF TESTIMONIAL FROM THE CHURCH AT YORK STREET.—LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.—RESIGNATION OF THE PASTORATE.—"CLAYTON MEMORIAL SCHOOLS."—DEATH OF MRS. JOHNSON.—ATTACK OF APOPLEXY.—GENEROSITY TO RELATIVES.—LAST YEAR OF LIFE.—LAST PUBLIC SERVICES.—LAST ENTRY IN HIS DIARY.—MRS. CLAYTON'S ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST MOMENTS.—DEATH.—FUNERAL SERVICES.

For more than three years, Mr. George Clayton continued a widower; but on December 18th, 1845, he entered again into the marriage relationship with Mary, the elder daughter of Edward Giles, Esq., of Clapham Common; an event which contributed so largely to his domestic and ministerial happiness, that, to the latest hour of his life, his heart breathed devoutest thanks to God, who had once more gilded his home with a chastened sunshine; and enabled him, in the genial society of one who could sympathize with him, in all matters social, intellectual, and spiritual, to realize as much of earthly blessedness as his soul could desire.

With devout joy does he record the fact, that never had his ministry been more acceptable, more valued, or useful, than in the fourth decade of his pastorate at Walworth. For some years afterward he continued to pursue his course, with an extraordinary measure of bodily health and strength. Public services, and more private labours, he says, were "never less fatiguing, or more pleasant." In 1846, he was permitted to lay the foundation of his beautiful mansion, at Gaines Park; and in June, 1849, entered upon its possession, with earnest supplication to his heavenly Father, to abide with him, "that it might be the house of prayer, and the dwelling-place of God."

In 1850, while on a visit to his brother, he had another attack, of an apoplectic character; but happily a very slight one,—for the immediate application of appropriate remedies led to a speedy restoration.

In February, 1851, he delivered the oration at the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Pye Smith, of Homerton, who had taken a prominent part in his settlement at Walworth, forty-seven years before, and of whom, in this excellent address, he speaks, with the admiration of a man who had learned to appreciate the great erudition of the departed; and with all the warmth of a friend, who loved the venerable sage, for his "humble and modest bearing, his gentleness and patience, the suavity and Christian courtesy of his manners, associated at the same time with the stern love of justice, and an uncompromising firmness of principle." He eulogized "his disinterestedness and generosity; the facility with which he forgave injuries, forbore to retaliate affronts, and ever returned good for evil; and that which formed the very climax of his virtues—his utter abnegation of self, and the willing attribution of all he was, all he possessed, all he achieved, solely to the 'grace which was with him.'"

The frequent recurrence of attacks of illness was too significant a warning to be despised; and thus he records his meditation on a subject which, for some time, had been engaging his attention:—

"The time is come, when I consider it my duty to call in more stated and regular assistance than I have hitherto required. The illness of last autumn, the state of my hearing, and some other minor symptoms of decay, remind me that the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, and that strength and vigour must decline. I have sought the Lord, on this point, in earnest prayer, and have been waiting for an answer. I seek not my own will, but His glory; not my way, but that which shall most conduce to the peace, progress, fruitfulness, and prosperity of the dear people, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom amongst us, and around us.

"*April 9th*, 1851."

It was about this time, that the following letter was sent to Mrs. W. D. Wills, on the occasion of an accident to her husband, by which a limb was broken. It has a solemn and affecting character about it, when read with the remembrance of the fact, that Mr. Wills was again the subject of a terrible accident, while attending the missionary meetings in London, in May, 1865. He was run over by an omnibus, in Holborn; and, being taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, suffered amputation of the leg, but, from the collapse that followed a few hours afterwards, he died:—

"GAINES, 29*th April*, 1851.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It gave to Mrs. Clayton and myself much pain to hear of the sad accident which has befallen your dear and excellent husband. My young cousin, Mr. G. Dawson, gave us the information on Sabbath morning; and the concern felt for the sufferer was deep and sincere. It extended beyond the limits of the pulpit; and the prayers of many hundreds of devout and sympathizing minds ascended to Heaven on his behalf and yours.

"We hope that the fractured limb is progressing favourably; and shall be happy, when you have a moment's leisure, to have the assurance of it from your own pen.

"I need not remind you of the comfort contained in the sentiment, 'My times are in thy hands.' All things that concern us are arranged and directed by a wisdom that cannot err, and a goodness which is unimpeachable and unchanging.

"If a sparrow falleth not to the ground without our Father, we are sure that no casualty can happen to us, but by the special permission or appointment of Him who has said, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

"I have sought for you both, a humble, patient, and submissive frame, under this trial; and the abundant sanctification of it, through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. Your good Mr. Wills has been, eminently, the *active* servant of God for many years; he is now called to practise another and a harder lesson, the exemplification of the *passive* graces, under the suspension of his wonted energies, in comparative solitude and quiet seclusion. It is good when a broken heart takes precedency of a broken limb; for such a heart prepares us to suffer with unrepining acquiescence, and will enable us to acknowledge, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.'

"'Wherefore doth a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?' especially when he has every reason to hope that sin is pardoned; that condemnation is averted; and that these 'light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory'?

"Present our united Christian regards and affectionate sympathy to Mr. Wills; accept the same yourself; and, with best remembrances to Mr. William, believe me, as ever, affectionately yours,

"GEORGE CLAYTON."

Before the end of this year he carried into effect the design he had for some time been contemplating. The admonitions of his own increasing feebleness, which now began to be sensibly felt, were too frequent and urgent for him any longer to delay making the request to his people, for assistance in the pulpit and the pastorate. Thus, under date November 28th, he writes:—

"The crisis, which I had already foreseen, and of which I have had many foreshadowing premonitions, has actually presented itself. Various ailments have assaulted the earthly house of this my frail and mortal tabernacle. I would fain have continued at my post for a longer season, and that in full occupation; but as the Supreme will, always good, seems to indicate another course, I desire to bow with unqualified submission, and without a murmuring word.

"I can most truly and distinctly aver that my chief solicitude has been about my beloved flock, whom I have tended, on one spot, for very nearly forty and eight years. I have feared lest they should be scattered; lest they should be disunited; lest any root of bitterness should spring up to trouble us; lest the fair and lovely garden should be blighted; souls scandalized; Christ dishonoured; His enemies furnished with causes of triumph, and the effective usefulness of an harmonious church be impaired. But is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? His promise is not forgotten by Him, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

"On Sabbath day, the 9th November, 1851, I announced the change to my people, who received it with the kindest sympathy and Christian feeling."

On May 17th, 1853, the Rev. P. J. Turquand was unanimously invited to the co-pastorate, at Walworth, with the most perfect and hearty concurrence of the minister who had so long laboured there. On June 7th, the forty-ninth anniversary of Mr. Clayton's own ordination, Mr. Turquand was set apart to the work, which, from that day to the present, he has been enabled, with many, and most encouraging, tokens of his great Master's approval, energetically to carry forward.

In June, 1853, Mr. Clayton gave a public expression to his attachment to one of the noblest institutions of the land, the "British and Foreign Bible Society." He had been connected with it almost from the first hour of its establishment; and for many years acted as one of the secretaries of the Southwark auxiliary, from which he received, on his retirement, an especial public acknowledgment of his services. The catholic character of this society won his heart; and throughout the whole of his public life it commanded his services, both on the platform and in the pulpit. On the occasion referred to, he gave an entertainment on his lawn, to between six and seven hundred persons—in commemoration of its jubilee.

In November he was again laid aside by illness, until April of the following year; when once more, and on his seventy-first birthday, he was enabled to preach.

The day when Mr. Clayton completed the fiftieth year of his pastorate, at Walworth, June 7th, 1854, was appropriately selected for the presentation of a splendid and costly testimonial of the esteem and regard of his flock.* It may well be believed that this public attestation of his fidelity and zeal, in the service of God and his people, was to him a source of the highest joy; and awakened in his heart most profound gratitude to Him who had so long preserved him in life, usefulness, and an unblemished reputation.

At the meeting held for the purpose of making the present, J. T. Briscoe, Esq., presided. The testimonial consisted of a massive silver waiter, bearing the following inscription:—

"Presented, with other plate, to the Rev. George Clayton, by the church and congregation assembling at York Street, Walworth; as a memorial of affectionate regard, and as a grateful testimony of his generous and successful exertions during a pastorate of fifty years."

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* This was the second testimonial of this nature which Mr. Clayton received; as, in 1836, one was made, on the thirty-second anniversary of his settlement at Walworth, "as a tribute of affection from a benefited people."

In addition to the salver, there were a large and magnificent centre-piece of the Tudor pattern—to be used either as an epergne or candelabra—and four table dishes and covers; the whole of the value of £337.

Dr. Morison, of Chelsea; Mr. White, one of the oldest and earliest friends of the pastor; Mr. Maidlow, Mr. Edward Edwards—by whose hands the testimonial was presented—Mr. Edward Corderoy, and others, were the principal speakers on the occasion. Mr. Potter, one of the members of the church, read an address from the congregation to their pastor, signed by 540 persons; from which I give one or two extracts:—

"We find that, during your ministry, not fewer than 1,757 members have been added to the church. Our place of worship has been very considerably enlarged. Institutions, the fruits of Christian benevolence, beneficial to the church and to the world, have flourished amongst us. Harmony and peace have prevailed; from the pulpit no uncertain sound has gone forth, to perplex the people; from the pews no spirit of revolt against the pure doctrines of the Gospel, or the settled order of religious worship, has arisen to grieve the minister. The Lord has made 'our Jerusalem to be to us a quiet habitation;' and 'walking in His fear, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, we have been multiplied.' For these blessings, continued for the term of half a century, we solemnly adore Almighty God, the gracious giver; and now tender to you, dear sir, our very sincere and cordial congratulations, as the chosen, and favoured, and faithful minister, through whose instrumentality He has been pleased to bestow them upon us.

"And, sir, we have yet further to add, that we are indebted to you, not only as the public teacher, but also as the pastor and friend of your people. Whilst health and strength permitted it, the dwellings of the rich and the poor have alike witnessed your visitations of Christian affection and kindness. You have sympathized with our sorrows, as well as partaken of our joys. When adverse circumstances or strong temptations, when sicknesses or bereavements, have cast their dark shadows around our families, and we have 'feared as we entered into the cloud,' how often have your prayers, your counsels, and your assistance also, helped to confirm our faltering faith, direct our doubtful course, and caused even the widow's heart to leap for joy! Be assured, dear sir, that these services are not forgotten; they are registered in heaven, for commendation at the great day of final account. They still live in the memory of a grateful people, who have benefited by them."

In the course of his reply, Mr. Clayton said,—

"It would be affectation to pretend that the circumstances in which we are met are not highly gratifying to the minister who, on the sixth day of the present month, witnessed the completion of the fiftieth year of his service and pastoral care, on this hallowed spot. . . .

"While, however, there is much that gratifies, there is much to humble and shame me, on the retrospect of the last half century of my public service. I can see so much of defect and imperfection tarnishing all my duties, and blemishing all my performances, even the very best of them, that self-abasement and self-renunciation, with the hope of forgiveness and acceptance, through the mercy of God in Christ, are the only elements in which I can find repose for my spirit.

"It has been my study and prayer, from the beginning, to fulfil, with conscientious fidelity, the PASTORAL RELATION; and I have therefore sedulously watched against all those seductive influences which might have turned me aside from the pursuit of this one object. My gifts, such as they are; my time, my labours, have been consecrated to the office of an under-shepherd, in inspecting, guiding, feeding, and comforting the flock committed to my charge. Uninfluenced by the many new opinions which I have seen rapidly rise to popularity, and then as fast decline; unterrified by opposition and menace, while the cry has resounded, on the right hand and the left, 'Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, there,' from the enemy's camp; unmoved by the allurements of literary distinction, and the notoriety secured by the time-consuming labours of the press; far removed from the arena of political conflict and party strife; indifferent to the smiles or frowns of the world—it has been my endeavour to be able to say, with the prophet Jeremiah, 'As for me, I have not hastened from being a PASTOR to follow thee;' and with the apostle Paul, 'I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' . . .

"I thank you, the people of my love and care, for all the kindness which the last fifty years have developed, in various forms, and in an unusual measure of generosity and constancy.

"I thank you for your steadfast friendship, contrasting so strongly, as it does, with that fickleness and love of change with which too many vagrant religionists are grievously infected.

"I thank you for your wise, tender, and delicate sympathy, under many distresses and private sorrows;—a sympathy always prompt, and manifested as often as I have been called to drink of the cup of personal or relative affliction; of which, as you well know, I have not unfrequently participated in large and deep draughts.

"I thank you much for your prayers, which I have the full assurance that God has heard and answered. To these, in fact, I trace very much of the harmony, happiness, and success, in which we have mutually shared.

"I thank you for your co-operation, in my labours at home and abroad. A cordial and generous co-operation it has ever been, and never withheld, where your own hearts approved the objects proposed to your adoption.

"I thank you for the peace and unity preserved among yourselves. Your quarrels and dissensions, had such arisen, would have gone far to break my heart, and to have driven me from my pulpit, long before the expiration of fifty years.

"I thank you for a liberal maintenance; for such it has been from the beginning. I speak it to your honour, as Christian men and Protestant Dissenters, that in this respect you have done more, under the providence of God, than I could have asked or expected. You have raised me, by the communication of your bounty, above *want*,—yes, more, above anxiety; and, even more, above the low-born earthly enterprises, in which too many teachers of Christianity have been induced to embark, till the life and vigour of their ministrations have been lost in a vortex of secularity and worldliness. While I have taught you, you have honourably supported *me*.

"I thank you for the heart-stirring address, which has just been read in your hearing. I thank you for the elegant and sumptuous testimonial of your esteem and affection, presented this evening. Truly can I aver, that I desired no gift at your hands; for 'I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.' But, as you have seen fit to make this splendid offering, I accept it with all cordiality and gratitude, and shall ever regard it, with feelings not to be described, as the oblation of my people's love."

Not only did ministerial brethren, in connexion with Mr. Clayton's own denomination, heartily congratulate him, on the honours his people had conferred upon him, but those belonging to other sections of the church of Christ joined them, in this graceful recognition of his lengthened services. I cannot withhold the letter of the venerable and excellent Dr. Sumner, the present bishop of Winchester, to whom Mr. Clayton had sent an account of the presentation of the Jubilee Testimonial. This was the bishop's reply, in acknowledgment of the receipt of the pamphlet:—

"FARNHAM CASTLE, *July 22nd*, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I desire to return my cordial thanks, for your just appreciation of the feelings with which I should receive the little Jubilee volume, you have had the kindness to send me.

"I recognize in this testimonial the best *earthly* recompense which a pastor can enjoy, after half a century of labours. I heartily pray that it may be an earnest to you of that higher and imperishable crown, not twined by mortal hands, or awarded by fallible judges, to which the great apostle could look forward, with so well-grounded a hope, and I am persuaded that you also; 2 Timothy iv. 8.—I am, my dear sir, with very sincere wishes for your prolonged health and welfare, very faithfully yours,

"REV. GEORGE CLAYTON." "C. WINTON.

The close of the year found Mr. Clayton at Brighton; and symptoms, very unfavourable to his health, presenting themselves, he was forbidden to preach for some time. This temporary suspension of duties was followed, in March, 1855, by his formally resigning his charge, after he had sustained the pastoral office for fifty-one years.

A short time before his resignation, the people at Walworth had resolved to erect "The Clayton Jubilee Memorial Schools," in commemoration of the goodness of God, in "having preserved the church and congregation, for a period of more than fifty years, in cordial and unbroken union and affection with their beloved pastor."

"The schools, which will accommodate 750 children, and cost with the site £2,754, were opened, June 27th, 1855, by an address from the Rev. Samuel Martin; and a public meeting followed.

"The opening sermon was preached to a crowded audience by the Rev. G. Clayton, on the following Sabbath, July 1st, from 1 Peter i. 18, 19." In this, referring to his name as connected with the schools, he observed:—

> "I accept the terms of that connexion. It is much more in harmony with my better judgment—with my principles—with my feelings—with my habits of life—with my near approach to another world—to have my name standing on this building, than upon any marble pillar, however sumptuous, that could be raised to my honour. . . . I do not look upon these schools merely as a personal offering, but also as an offering to the poor of this neighbourhood—to the dense masses of children by which we are surrounded; and, also, as an omen of future prosperity to the church of Christ on this spot. When God moves us to do much for Him, He intends to do much for us."

Although he had retired from the pastorate, Mr. Clayton did not refrain altogether from preaching. In the autumn of 1855, he was found engaging in public services at Stockport, Leeds, and Scarborough.

The year 1857 was ushered in with the death of Mr. Clayton's only surviving sister, Mrs. Johnson, to whom frequent references have been made, in connexion with her parents. She was, as her brother, who knew her well, says, not only "a real, but an eminent Christian; and was adorned with the graces of the Holy Spirit, even as a bride prepared for her husband." But, for years, as has been already stated, this amiable lady lived in an atmosphere of intense spiritual gloom. Horror and anguish gat hold upon her; and all the reasonings and encouragements of friends, whom she loved and revered, failed to relieve her. It was "total eclipse," as to spiritual comfort, from the beginning to the end of her life. It was to survivors a consolation, when that end was reached; for those who knew her best were perfectly certain that all her wretchedness was the result of a morbid state of health; while her whole course was that of one who had been born of God, and who exhibited the evidences of that new birth in her spirit, temper, humbleness of mind, and profound reverence for all that was good.

"If it be a clear and certain rule," says her brother, "'By their fruits ye shall know them,' then have we a blessed assurance that these fruits, brought forth in long continuance and rich abundance, satisfactorily demonstrate that she belonged to Christ, and will be acknowledged by Him at the last day. I have learned to distinguish between what relates to the *safety* of the believer, and his *sensible consolation and enjoyment;* what is absolutely *necessary,* and what is greatly *desirable.*

"Mrs. Johnson lived a life of faith and love; of self-renunciation and contrition; of constant kindness and extensive beneficence. She lived, not to herself, but others; and after she had done much, and done all, she threw everything aside, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

This was to be a memorable year to the Clayton family, in the way of bereavement, for, within nine days, the amiable wife of his brother John followed her sister-in-law into the eternal world.

On April 9th, when Mr. George Clayton had reached his seventy-fourth birthday, he had one of the most serious attacks, of an apoplectic character, which he had ever known. He fell with great violence to the ground; giving the whole physical frame a severe shock, and producing an affection of the brain. For several weeks he continued very ill; the object of the watchful care and tenderness of his estimable and devoted wife; whose active affection, and unwearied sympathy and help, were among the sweetest solaces in his affliction, and whom, he says, "God has made an unspeakable blessing to me, in the evening of my days." By degrees he regained his strength; and a sojourn for a month at the sea-side materially aided in this restoration.

By the demise of his sister a large sum of money came into his possession, one half of which, without any legal obligation to do so, he handed over to the relatives of her first husband; not waiting till his own death should render it no longer possible to enjoy this increase of wealth, but freely giving it up in his lifetime. He had performed a similar act towards some of his first wife's relatives; anticipating her dying request, that he would direct this to be done *after* his own decease: preferring, in this matter, to be his own executor, although, by so doing, he lessened considerably his property, and his annual income. "I rejoice to do this," he said, "for the love I bore to her, the gratitude I cherish for her memory, and for God's goodness in preserving her so long to me; as well as to prove to myself, that a greedy and grasping spirit, that would hold all it can till the last moment, for self, is utterly inconsistent with the Christian character, and the office of the Christian minister, and is by all means to be subdued and mortified."

From this time his ministerial services were very few, yet were they not wholly omitted. But, that the servant might not suppose he was altogether forgotten by the Master he had so faithfully served, or imagine that he had ceased to be useful in the church of God, he was able to write thus: "It has happened that the last year has brought to light, by communications from various quarters, many remarkable instances of usefulness in my ministry, in years more recent, or long ago passed away. I thank God that He has permitted me to become acquainted with them, for my encouragement and joy of heart."

He was enabled to preach, during this year, at Upminster and Lowestoft; and filled his post at the Merchants' Lecture, when his half-yearly turn came round. In this latter pleasant duty, he maintained his position to the very last.

The year 1862, which was to witness the close of his long life and labours, was ushered in with a grateful acknowledgment of past mercies, and a kind of premonitory meditation on death, as close at hand. Thus he writes on January 1st:—

> "According to my advanced period of life, the time remaining to me must needs be short; and soon the angel's voice shall assure me that time with me 'shall be no longer.' Then will disclose itself a solemn, measureless, ever-during, unchangeable Eternity! Am I on my way to its blessedness? Am I every year becoming more meet for the enjoyment of it?"

Then came his seventy-ninth birthday, the last he was to spend on earth; and thus his spirit, pluming its wings for a heavenly flight, mused:—

"*April 9th*, 1862.—This day ushers in the eightieth year of my mortal existence; and I bless God that I am indulged with a season of solitude, for the purpose of reviewing the past, contemplating the present, and looking forward to the future.

"In surveying my present circumstances, I find myself placed in a truly felicitous position, *personally*. I fill a highly comfortable, honourable, and influential sphere, with not a few opportunities of usefulness, in the church and in the world.

"*Relatively*, I am very mercifully dealt with, in one of the kindest, cleverest, most attentive, and best of wives. . . . . The future of this life must now of necessity be *short*. The night cometh apace. It is wisely measured, and its limit decreed, with absolute and immutable certainty. Its precise character and complexion, of which I can form no prognostication, I am content to leave entirely with God. Its close I would desire to keep constantly in view; and to say from the heart, 'When Thou wilt, where Thou wilt, as Thou wilt; only let me be found in Jesus, and looking for the mercy of God, through Him alone, unto eternal life.'

"I have felt my heart much drawn out in prayer, not for myself and my family alone, but for others, especially the following:—

"1st. All the infants whom I have baptized, who, to the present time, have survived the blasts of mortality; the entire number being considerably more than two thousand. May God be to them a Father, and Jesus a Saviour!

"2nd. All whom I have instrumentally received into the church, by a public profession. May they so run as to obtain; endure to the end; and so be finally saved!

"3rd. All who have ascribed their religious impressions and conversion to my teaching and care."

His *last* pulpit service was in the chapel at Upminster, where he preached his *first* sermon; thus singularly closing a round of public duties, performed in all parts of the United Kingdom, during a period of more than sixty years, at the very same place where he had begun them. For some little time the church in this village had been without a pastor, and Mr. Clayton kindly supplied the lack of service, when required. During the first months of 1862, he delivered a course of lectures on prayer, for which he received the written thanks of the people to whom he had so kindly ministered. His last text was from Psalm cvi. 4, 5: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Admirably appropriate were these words for a parting discourse; and as constituting the last prayer for himself and the church of Christ; for his heart, while reposing on the love of God, and finding its chief joy in believing on Him who had redeemed him, found also a hallowed blessedness in his conscious relationship with all those who adored the same Lord.

Gradually his physical strength declined; but the spirit of the minister and the Christian was unaffected by this decay. Beautifully and brightly the faith and hope of the believer shone, like stars amid the gathering gloom of the night; the Gospel he had so long and faithfully preached proving a consolation and stay to his soul.

On June 22nd, three weeks before his death, he made the last entry in his diary. The handwriting is a great improvement on most of the previous pages; and although he had had a severe attack of illness, nothing seemed to indicate the near approach of his last hour.

"*June* 22*nd*, 1862.—At this particular season, I feel called on to make an *especial* record of the great goodness and marvellous lovingkindness of God, my covenant Father, and faithful Friend, towards His unworthy servant. Though the deliverances I have experienced have borne a near relation to temporal affairs and interests, yet why should the wonders He has wrought, in His providential administration, be lost in silence and forgot?"

He then adverts to these private matters, and thus concludes:—

"O my soul, often review and gratefully remember this very observable conjunction of events!

"There are also certain other circumstances to which I have applied the inspired exhortation, 'Have faith in God.'

"I have now pending interests, all which I have placed under the lock of promise, fastened by the key of faith, and that key moistened by the oil of prayer.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all our diseases; who crowneth our lives with lovingkindness and tender mercy. *Forget not* all His benefits!"

These last words were the burden of his heart-song, all through life; and most felicitously do they conclude the recorded sentiments of more than sixty years.

Ten days before his death, I visited him at Gaines, to confer with him on the subject of the Family Memorial, which, at his request, I had consented to prepare for the press. He appeared then very feeble; yet not more so than I had known him to be for some time. The small circle of friends that, on the occasion of this visit, gathered round his hospitable board, did not certainly suppose that so soon the grave would close over their host. But he was unable to do more, at the dinner-table, than just preside in the midst of his visitors; which he did with all the grace and courtesy for which he was distinguished through his whole life. Before the meal was finished he was obliged to vacate his seat, and retire to his couch; and his guests, whose eyes followed his retreating figure with reverential looks, gazed, as he left the room, on his open manly countenance, for the last time. The door that closed upon him hid him from our view, till we meet him again in the Father's house; for we had scarcely left his dwelling, before the dark shadow of death began to gather round it.

While he lay on his dying bed, a letter was delivered to him from a young girl in Australia, informing him that he was the means of her conversion to God. Gratefully did his heart welcome this intelligence, as he stood on the threshold of the eternal world. It was sweet as the ointment that Mary poured on her Master's head. It was as though His adoring servant had also received an anointing for *his* burial.

His loving and faithful friend and companion, who sat by his bedside, through all the days that he was confined to his chamber, and, with the tenderness of the wife, and the skill of the nurse, ministered to his necessities, thus refers to his last hours, in words that were written under the influence of the elevating thoughts, that a spiritual realization of his entrance upon the beatific engagements of the heavenly temple suggested to her mind:—

"Being unable to join in the prayers and praises of God's people, by that infirmity, sent in loving discipline, he was in the habit, whilst in God's house, of commending the occupiers of each pew to the care of the Good Shepherd. How different now! No infirmity to shut out the glorious melody of heaven. He hears the songs of angels, and casts his crown at the feet of that Saviour, whom, on earth, he loved and served. My husband's last sermon was preached at Upminster, on the first Sunday in June. The Saturday following, that illness commenced which terminated in his removal to his Master's presence. During days, and sometimes nights, of pain, no murmur escaped his lips; and he frequently expressed his feelings of gratitude to that kind earthly physician, to whose skill he felt himself so much indebted for a mitigation of his suffering. On his last Sabbath, he remarked to a faithful domestic, who was waiting upon him: 'I know the hand of the Lord is upon me, but I would not wish to raise my little finger to alter any of His dispensations; for I feel that it is love, and I know I have a home prepared for me above.'

"Prayer for patience, thanksgivings for innumerable mercies, and words of advice, to look up! to look up! (pointing heavenwards)—addressed to her who was so soon to lose the benefit of his bright example, his loving care, and his earnest prayers;—these were all that could be heard from that bed of death. Perfect peace was there; a firm footing on the Rock of Ages, while underneath him were the everlasting arms; and with serene composure, this servant of God passed from a world of sin and sorrow into the presence of his Saviour, there to praise Him for ever and ever."

Mr. Clayton's remains were brought to Abney Park cemetery, for burial. There a tomb had some years before been prepared, to which the coffins of the members of the Clayton family were removed from the vault in Bunhill Fields.

On Tuesday, July 22nd, the corpse, followed by eight mourning coaches, containing the family and friends of the deceased, and several private carriages, was brought to the Congregational church, Kingsland, the area of which was filled by a large and most respectable audience, comprising many of his attached flock at Walworth, who had thus come to pay the last tribute of respect to one whom in life they had so sincerely loved, and whom in his death they bewailed, with heartfelt sorrow.

The Rev. John Clayton, the eldest and sole surviving member of his father's family, attended as chief mourner.

The coffin was borne into the church, and placed in the front of the pulpit, while the organ pealed forth a funeral dirge. The hymn was sung, commencing,

"Our fathers, where are they,
With all they called their own?"

and the minister of the church then read Psalm xc., Daniel xii., 2 Corinthians iv., and offered prayer. The Rev. H. Madgin, the pastor of the flock at Upminster, with whom Mr. Clayton worshipped, in the latter years of his life, gave a most appropriate address.

"Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims,"

was afterwards sung; and while the organ played the "Dead March in Saul," the body was removed to the hearse, and the mourners proceeded to the grave at the cemetery, where the remains of this faithful minister of God were placed.

The Rev. T. Aveling addressed the numerous friends who stood around the grave, and Mr. Turquand read a portion of the burial service of the Church of England.

On the morning of the following Sunday, the Rev. John Stoughton preached the funeral sermon at Walworth, from the text, Daniel xii. 13: "But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days;" and read a short account of Mr. Clayton, which had been prepared for the occasion. In the evening, Mr. Turquand preached from Acts xiii. 36: "After he had served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep." Both sermons were published, together with an account of the funeral solemnities.

From Mr. Turquand's discourse I give the following quotation:—

"After my ordination I began to realize my position, and feel the responsibilities which must rest on one who succeeded such 'a prince in Israel.' I saw a numerous congregation, which hung with delight on his eloquent lips. I heard prayers which were most comprehensive, including not only subjects of world-wide interest, but descending to the minute daily affairs, the social sorrows and joys of his congregation. He possessed a remarkable power of clothing worldly affairs in devout and inspired language.

"I beheld him the pastor of a church, whose oversight all might covet. By gradual stages of success, it had reached a summit of prosperity and influence, rarely equalled—perhaps never exceeded—in the history of our denomination. Benevolent societies existed, for the relief of those who were in sickness and want. Clothing societies gave garments to the poor. A day school taught the young their duties to others. Sunday schools instructed them in their duties to God. All approved agencies were employed; and supported by himself.

"I was his companion in his pastoral visitations; a guest with him in social gatherings; and was amazed at the interesting and instructive tone of his conversations, and his power of comforting and soothing the anxious and distressed mind. You remember how, at the baptismal font, gracefully folding the little ones in his arms, his countenance beaming with pleasure and with love, he would commend them to God; allude to the excellencies of ancestors who, perhaps, were long since dead; and, varying his prayers in every case, implore the God of their fathers to make them the best and happiest of their race.

"As a speaker on the platform, he marvellously excelled; happily combining the eloquent, the pleasing, and instructive.

"He influenced all classes. His portrait, which hangs on so many cottage walls, tells of the love of the poor; and not less numerous, though less known, are the proofs of his influence among the rich. Amidst his people he was the one centre of attraction, and was willingly offered the love of every heart, and the homage of every mind. Considered as a man, a friend, a preacher, or as a pastor, few men ever excited so great an influence, or wielded so great a power."

In the chapel at Walworth, his people placed a marble tablet, on which were engraved these words:—

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF
THE REV. GEORGE CLAYTON,
WHO, FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY,
WAS THE BELOVED AND HONOURED PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH.
HE DIED ON THE 14TH JULY, 1862,
IN THE EIGHTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

"Distinguished for great consistency of Christian character, courtesy of manner, uniform kindness to the poor, and untiring devotedness to his ministerial work; his faithful and earnest preaching of the Gospel was greatly blessed of God to the conversion and edification of many souls."

◆

"Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

His widow placed a tablet in the chapel at Upminster, with the following inscription:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. GEORGE CLAYTON, OF GAINES PARK,
WHO, FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS,
HONOURABLY SUSTAINED THE OFFICE OF PASTOR
OVER THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN YORK STREET, WALWORTH.

HE DISCHARGED HIS DUTIES
WITH AN UNTIRING FIDELITY AND CHRISTIAN COURTESY,
WHICH SECURED THE WARMEST AFFECTION OF A NUMEROUS CONGREGATION;
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EVERY EFFORT TO SPREAD
THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST
RECEIVED THE BENEFIT OF HIS ELOQUENT AND EARNEST ADVOCACY.

THE LATTER YEARS OF HIS LIFE WERE EMPLOYED
IN PROMOTING THE WORK OF GOD IN THIS VILLAGE,
AND WERE HONOURED BY MANY TOKENS OF DIVINE FAVOUR.

HE WAS BORN THE 9TH OF APRIL, 1783,
AND PEACEFULLY CEASED A LIFE OF HOLY DEVOTEDNESS
ON THE 14TH OF JULY, 1862, AGED SEVENTY-NINE YEARS.

◆

"Where I am, there shall also my servant be" (John xii. 26).

Chapter XXV.

REV. JOHN CLAYTON, JUN.—1848-1865.

RESIDENCE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND. — OCCASIONAL SERVICES. — A MINISTER'S FRIEND.—ILLNESS OF HIS GRANDDAUGHTER.—LETTERS TO REV. R. HAMILTON. — DEATH OF HIS BROTHER GEORGE. — INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.—LAST SERMON. — DECLINING STRENGTH. — HUMILITY OF SPIRIT. — DEATH OF HIS GRANDDAUGHTER. — MENTAL DEPRESSION. — DEATH. — FUNERAL SERVICES. — EXTRACT FROM DR. SPENCE'S SERMON. — DESCENDANTS. — ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER.— HIS HOSPITALITY.— HIS CHEERFULNESS. — HIS POLITICAL CREED.—HIS GENEROSITY.

After Mr. John Clayton's retirement from the pastorate, he resided at Worthing, Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, and Dorking; the genial climate of the south of England being suited to the growing infirmities which began to creep over him, and which justified him in the step he had taken, in resigning his charge. By degrees the fine athletic form began to bend under the weight of years; and lost much of its activity, through the contracting grasp of rheumatism, of which he was more or less the victim, during the closing period of his life.

Still the mind and heart lost nothing of their vigour and kindliness; and the spirit of the minister remained unchanged, in its yearnings to do good, as opportunity offered. He was ever ready to yield to the solicitations of his brethren, to render help in the pulpit; and no one who supplied the lack of service of the stated pastor was ever more cordially welcomed, or more reverently listened to, than the "Evangelist of the South Coast," as he termed himself.

It was a rich treat to hear the clear, and faithful, and earnest enunciations of the truths of the Gospel of Christ, which fell from the lips of the "old man eloquent." He proved to the congregations which were strangers to him, quite as much as to his own late beloved flock, in the Poultry, that he was careful so to preach, as to be able with truth to say, in the retrospect of the services,—"I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

While at Brighton, he attended, with great pleasure, the ministry of the Rev. A. King, of Queen's Square chapel; and on the departure of that gentleman from England, worshipped at London Road chapel; with the pastor of which, the Rev. R. Hamilton, he formed a close friendship, that revealed itself in a frequent epistolary correspondence, both while he resided at Brighton, and when he removed to Torquay and Bath.

Nothing can be more indicative of the true-heartedness, the delicate sensitiveness, the scrupulous care, and native courtesy of Mr. Clayton, than his conduct towards his ministerial brethren, with whom he was associated in church fellowship. There was an attendance at the sanctuary conscientious and constant; a hearing the most respectful given to the teachings of the pulpit; and a warm grasp of the hand, and a few hearty words of acknowledgment of profit and pleasure, derived from the exercise in which they had been engaged, when the minister returned to the vestry:—not unfrequently to the encouragement of a drooping spirit, which, with a loftier standard of what preaching should be, than it had been able to reach, was at times depressed with a sense of its own imperfections.

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." It is a cheering reflection to the servant of Christ, when keenly alive to the poverty of the material employed, that a treasure does, nevertheless, reside within it, and can be thence communicated to others; and that he is thus made "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

In all matters relating to the government of the church with which he associated himself, to the arrangement of its services, and the management of its secularities, he never stepped beyond the bounds of the position he had voluntarily assumed, as a private member. If his judgment was sought, on any point,—as not unnaturally it would be, from one of such large experience,—it was ever given with a modesty equal to its frankness and sensibleness. The beloved brethren, with whom at different times Mr. Clayton worshipped, can bear hearty and unanimous testimony to the truth of this representation.

To the officers of the church associated with the minister—as was ever the case in his intercourse with his own deacons, when he was a pastor—there was the courteous recognition of the fact that they were the chosen of the people; and as such, and fulfilling well their duties, they received from him the respect which they deserved, who had thus "purchased to themselves a good degree."

These remarks are introduced here, to show how wisely and kindly Mr. Clayton performed a delicate task. For it is no very easy matter, after having been looked up to, for fifty years, as the supposed centre of intelligence, and after having so long exercised a delegated authority over the church of God, to settle down, in the capacity and position of a private member of a Christian community. No small amount of grace is requisite to abnegate one's self, after this fashion,—although it is a duty; and the correct, and conscientious fulfilment of it, or the pursuit of an opposite course, may either minister to a brother's usefulness and comfort, or paralyze his spirit, and dishearten him in his work.

It is one of Mr. Clayton's noblest titles, which not a few now living can cordially attach to his name, that he was emphatically A MINISTER'S FRIEND.

The death of his only surviving sister, on January 6th, 1857, brought him up to town to attend her funeral; and this was followed, with alarming rapidity, scarcely more than a week afterwards, by the death of his second wife, who had been for some time a confirmed invalid. She died January 15th of that year, aged eighty-one, esteemed and beloved for her many Christian excellencies.

Again Mr. Clayton was left alone; save that a beloved granddaughter, the child of his eldest son—who had died in the prime of life,—was left to cheer his solitariness. Of course, his house was often visited by his daughters, or some members of their families; but this orphan grandchild lived with him. However, the anticipated comfort, in connexion with this latter relative, was doomed, ere long, to a sorrowful disappointment. He, who had hoped to be soothed and sustained in his declining years by the filial attentions of his youthful companion, had to take his place by her side, as the watcher over a sickness that was destined to be unto death.

Nothing can be more touching than the bursts of tenderness, with which, in his communications to his numerous correspondents, he refers to his discharge of the mournful task which the providence of God had assigned to him. Day by day he observed, with paternal grief, the slow but sure progress of the insidious disease, that was sapping the foundations of a life so very dear to himself. On her behalf he left Sussex for Clifton, Bath, and Torquay; staying at each of these places for a season, and hoping, by the several changes thus enjoyed, to prolong the days of the beloved invalid.

When his seventy-ninth birthday arrived, he thus acknowledged a fraternal greeting, which he had received on the occasion from the Rev. R. Hamilton, with whom he had at this time found his spiritual home :—

"22, BUCKINGHAM PLACE, *May* 14*th*, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I detach a few moments from the social circle, this afternoon, that I may not delay to thank you, and your excellentissima, for your congratulations, and your good wishes, on the return of my natal day. I spent it, as usual with me, in retirement; and occupied myself in a neighbouring village, in humiliation, meditation, praise, and prayer. He, who was the witness to my transactions, can testify, that as I passed near your door, last evening, I sent upwards some sincere and strong aspirations, that it might please God to pour down, on your habitation and its residents, the bounties of His providence, and the riches of His grace; and that you might go on and prosper in your work, till, at a very distant day, you might be surrounded by a multitude of whom you may exclaim, with unutterable transports, 'Here am I, and the children which thou hast graciously given me.'

"I feel it a solemn thing to touch my eightieth year. I have had some sore trials of late; but I took down my harp from the willows, and played the Lord's song, in this strange land, to these words, 'Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I trust.'

'Hic murus aheneus esto.'

"May you receive a copious baptism of the best influences from above, to qualify you for to-morrow's services; and to insure to them that success over which the church militant and triumphant shall rejoice.

"Accept, and present to Mrs. Hamilton, the assurances of my esteem and Christian love; and offer my kind remembrances to the young folks; and believe me, my dear sir, yours cordially and faithfully, "JOHN CLAYTON."

Amid these varied changes, and with so much to depress him, he never lost his native sprightliness. Indeed, the elasticity of his spirit, throughout his whole life, was wonderful,—but for it he must have sunk, under the pressure of the various trials that befell him. The following letter, addressed to the Rev. R. Hamilton, and dated Torquay, September 5th, 1860, shows the cheerfulness and vigour of his mind:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I may have appeared to be very dilatory, in replying to your favour, sent to me so long ago; but though I have purposed to answer it frequently, and have often talked of you and yours, I have been in such a state of uncertainty, that I have been tempted to neglect my duty, as a correspondent. I must rely, therefore, on your mercy to forgive; and while many around me are absorbed in shooting partridges and hares, I will devote this day to make the *amende honorable* to my friends.

"The real fact is, that through the fluctuations of our health, for many weeks, I did not know whether you would not have seen me and mine in Brighton; but though we are still invalids, we have been led, by a variety of considerations, to ensconce ourselves in a little cottage; and have made up our minds to winter (D.V.) in this warm and lovely locality. My dear orphan, though very feeble, is on the whole better.

"Though I am now numbered with octogenarians, I never remember such a state of the weather, any previous year of my existence. We were two months at Clifton, looking out of the windows at snow, sleet, rain, and opaque clouds, which obscured the lovely prospect by which we were surrounded. During this period we had only four fine days. I continued to receive advice from medical friends, to proceed to Torquay; and after I have given this a trial, I know not what (should life be spared) may be my next step; but I believe that God numbers my hairs, and will determine the bounds of my habitation.

"I greatly miss your cheerful company on a Monday, and especially your ministry on the Sabbath. I have tried to hear eight ministers, but can only hear one, who is a member of a Baptist church.* I have not settled at any place yet; as I wait to ascertain who is coming to the chapel I wish to attend. For though I do not class myself with aggressives of a certain cast, I am a decided Congregationalist; and consider their economy the most scriptural, and the most conducive to usefulness, in the church and in the world.

"I am much afflicted by the death of Mr. Sortain, whom I had known from his boyhood. He was a man and minister, *sui generis;* and I could strongly sympathize with many who deplored the loss of the pastor in North Street chapel. But some of his panegyrists, in the ardour of their love and zeal, gave him ample credit on some few points, in which, I think, he did not excel. I am happy, however, to know, from very good judges, that, for the past few years, his ministry has been more fully evangelical than it was aforetime.†

"There will be some difficulty to find an appropriate successor;

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* Mr. Clayton refers to his inability to hear—*physically;* a terrible deafness, which seems to have been an hereditary affliction in the family, rendering it impossible for him to catch the words of a speaker, unless his enunciation was most distinct, and his voice somewhat loud. His absence from the ministrations of many brethren—whom he heartily loved, for their work's sake,—in the several places where he resided, was usually to be accounted for by this distressing peculiarity.

† I do not think that this estimate of Mr. Sortain's earlier ministrations is a correct one. "I am happy to know, from very good judges," as well as from personal observation, that Mr. Sortain, with a pure eloquence, with great beauty of illustration, and intense earnestness of manner, "by manifestation of the truth commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Some of the most stirring appeals ever addressed to crowded audiences, and some of the most full and faithful exhibitions of the cross of Christ, ever presented by the heralds of the Gospel, were delivered from the pulpit of North Street chapel, Brighton, by its departed minister, whose soul was too strong and vigorous for the fragile form in which it dwelt.

but though we are mortal, and are not suffered to continue by reason of death, Jesus lives, and His fountain of fulness is inexhaustible. 'Jehovah-jireh! The Lord will provide.'

"I rejoice to hear of the advancement of the interest at the London Road chapel, and heartily adopt the prayer of David: 'Peace be within the walls, and prosperity within the palaces, of Jerusalem.'

"It is a common adage, 'The last pound breaks the camel's back.' I shall be glad to put it on the creature called Debt, and should be happy to extinguish it altogether.

"Confined and deaf, as I am, I am a sort of cormorant of books. I have read very many since I left Brighton. I am now passing through Smiles's *Self-Help;* a very interesting book,—especially to young men, at their entrance on life. I have just finished Binney's lecture on Sir T. F. Buxton, which is a valuable address, and likely to be very useful. In my better moments I am perusing Bickersteth's *Water of Life,* —a most devotional work, and calculated to inspire the wish:

'O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame!'

"But I shall weary you with my prolixity; and I think I see you gaping, and saying to your estimable Victoria, 'Ah, the writer is indulging in the garrulity of old age!'

"Then I will close with an assurance of my esteem and affection to you both; and with kind remembrances to the young folks; only adding that I am, my dear sir, your attached and faithful friend, "JOHN CLAYTON.

"P.S.—Just whisper in Mrs. H.'s ear, that a bird, said to be not famed for wisdom, will fly to her larder on the 28th of this month."

In July, 1862, while residing at Bath, he received the somewhat unexpected tidings of the death of his brother George; and once more came to London, to visit the family grave.

It was very affecting, to the numerous spectators of that solemn service, to see the only surviving branch of that generation stand, bareheaded, by the side of the open sepulchre, in which the remains of his beloved brother had just been deposited; to reflect that, with the greatest probability, he would be the next inmate of that silent home; and to watch the eager look he bent upon the speaker, who, in a short address, referred to the excellencies of the deceased. As I spoke of the days of their childhood, passed at their mother's knees, and of the scenes of their youth, so long, long ago, the old man's frame quivered with emotion; for, being close to me, while I spoke, he heard every word; and with eye uplifted to heaven, seemed silently to be communing with his divine Father, and inwardly exclaiming, "O God, Thou hast taught us from our youth: and hitherto have we declared thy wondrous works. Now also when *I* am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not! Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

From this time, Mr. Clayton's life was spent more and more in seclusion. His physical infirmities greatly incapacitated him from going out into company; but he was always delighted to receive his old friends, at his own dwelling. When brethren from London visited Brighton, or Bath, to advocate the cause of some of our religious institutions, he was wont to invite them to dine with him; and if domestic circumstances made it inconvenient to receive them, at his own house, he always provided a hospitable entertainment at some hotel.

But at last this had to be given up; and the necessary omission of his accustomed hospitalities was, of itself, the most unmistakable evidence of his consciousness of failing strength. When visiting Bath, as a deputation from the London Missionary Society, along with the

Rev. John Wardlaw, who had then recently returned a second time from India, we called, at Mr. Clayton's request, to see him. I remember how delighted he was to meet this excellent missionary; and how his eye glistened, as he referred to the venerable father of his visitor, Dr. Wardlaw, one of Mr. Clayton's own contemporaries. The conversation on his part was as cheerful and racy as ever. He was full of anecdotes of men, all gone to their reward; and seemed, in the society of his younger brethren,—who listened with interest and admiration to his words, as he passed, by easy transition, "from grave to gay, from lively to severe,"—as if he had cast off the old man and become young again; until some twinge of pain reminded him that a body, over which the storms of fourscore and two years had passed, must not take too great liberties with itself.

While at Bath, Mr. Clayton attended, when he was able, the ministry of the Rev. W. S. Edwards, at the Vineyard chapel, which was within a stone's throw of his residence, in Bladud's Buildings; and it was with him, and with some of the people of his charge, among whom he found one of his old Poultry members, Mr. W. J. Clarke, he held sweet intercourse, to the very close of life.

His last sermon was preached in Bath, on the passage of the Jordan, by the Israelites, into the promised land. Perhaps the conviction, which, when he had passed the boundary of fourscore years, must have been felt, each time he preached, that *that* might be the last occasion, naturally led his thoughts to such a subject; which very appropriately closed a ministry of more than sixty years.

His gradually declining powers were preparing himself and his friends for the change which awaited him. To him the future had no terrors; while it was equally the case that he knew nothing of emotions approximating to ecstasy. His was a temperament with which such emotions are rarely found associated; for, though at first sight it may appear strange, it is nevertheless true, as the experience and observation of many can testify, that those who are naturally of a vivacious temperament, and who, in the intercourse of daily life, are buoyant and hopeful, are far from entertaining and exhibiting similar states of feeling, when they contemplate their relations with the Holy One. The majesty of that holiness awes and confounds them; and the longer and closer they have walked with God, the more they have learned their own insignificance and unworthiness. While, with the young and ardent spirit, glowing with delight in the vision of the infinite love of God, hope is in the ascendency; in the hearts of the aged, who have learned also to look at the infinite purity of God, a very different sentiment is awakened. The nearer they approach the throne, the more they sympathize with the seraphim, who, with veiled faces, stand before it, and fill heaven with the adoring cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts."

But the same humble trust in the divine guidance, which had characterized Mr. Clayton through life, was conspicuously visible in his last days. "I have no raptures," I once heard him say; "but I am clinging to the Cross, as an unworthy but trusting one, whose only cry is, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

To Mr. Clarke he said, a short time before he died, "I am either a monument of vengeance, or a monument of mercy; but I trust it is the latter."

The event, for which many months of watchfulness had prepared him,—the death of his beloved granddaughter,—took place, in September, 1862; and this link, which seemed to have bound him to life, having been broken, he prepared for his own departure. He set his house in order; and, steadfastly looking towards the land afar off, walked calmly down to the river, which he must cross, before he could enter upon the promised possession.

But he was not to be permitted to pass homeward without a stern conflict.

It is not infrequently the case,—and it is among the mysteries of the divine dealings with some of the most godly,—that the day, which has for the most part been one of full sunshine, but now and then—perhaps, only momentarily—obscured, should decline amidst thickest clouds of gloom, before the hour for sinking behind the horizon has come.

There is no doubt that physical causes will account for these phenomena. Still, whatever has produced them, they are painful in the extreme; and living friends can only reverently cast the mantle of charity and silence over the sufferer; and wait patiently the hour that shall emancipate the imprisoned spirit from this "body of humiliation."

It cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise that, during the progress of the disease which ultimately removed Mr. Clayton hence, there should have come over the spirit, sympathizing with the weakness of the physical frame, a temporary darkness and sadness, a depression and hopelessness of spirit, which his friends observed with deep sorrow and sympathy. But such visitations were only temporary; the clouds were passing ones; and, even when they hung over him, the rifts in their folds let through a divine radiance, which streamed calmly and beautifully on him. "At evening time it shall be light."

Diligently and faithfully attended by one who, for many years, had been the companion of his deceased wife, and who ministered to his necessities, when his failing strength rendered such aid imperative, all that was required by him was done, with respectful tenderness.

At length it became very evident to watchful friends that the silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl was breaking. The once-busy brain began to exhibit signs of lassitude and weakness, which were premonitory of a rapid approach of second childhood, unless death should step in, and avert the dreaded calamity. Slowly, yet surely, glided on the dark shadow, which was to stand between the mind and "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The chambers of memory began to close up, one by one; the voices of the past were hushed into silence, no more to be broken till the hour should come when God would be heard exclaiming, "Behold, I make all things new." The mental faculties became dull and feeble in their action; and there remained only the wreck of the body, as a sad and sympathizing companion to the once noble mind.

It was a happy morning that brought the summons to the sufferer, "Come up hither;" and those who loved him the most, gave God thanks that He had taken "the soul of the departed out of the miseries of this sinful world."

He died at Bath, October 3rd, 1865, in his eighty-sixth year; and after a funeral service had been conducted at Kingsland Congregational church,—Dr. Spence and the Rev. T. Aveling, according to his last request, officiating on the occasion,—his remains were placed with those of his family, in the vault at Abney Park cemetery.

Funeral sermons were preached for him, in the several places of worship with which he had been identified. The Rev. R. Hamilton, of Brighton, and the Rev. Dr. Spence, at the Poultry, both took the same text—Acts xiii. 36: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption."

From the discourse, delivered from the pulpit where Mr. Clayton had so long and so faithfully proclaimed the Gospel, and which has been kindly placed at my disposal by my esteemed brother, Dr. Spence, I extract the following passages:—

"As a preacher he was fluent and fervent; always evangelical, and full of unction. He had a remarkable facility of expression; with a polish of style, and an earnestness of manner, exceedingly attractive. He never strained after the intellectual or philosophical; nor did he for the novel; but his preaching was always substantial and intelligent, marked by strong good sense, and eminently calculated to be useful. Sometimes he rose to bursts of impassioned eloquence, which produced a vivid and thrilling effect upon his audience. His discourses generally embodied a happy combination of doctrinal, experimental, and practical truth; applied felicitously to the every-day experience of human life, in a manner that brought it home to the hearts of the hearers. Many who could testify this, still live; many more, I believe, have passed to glory, who with profit and pleasure heard the Gospel from his lips.

"'It is more than half a century,' writes the Rev. Thomas James to me, 'since I first heard Mr. Clayton preach, at his chapel, in Camomile Street. Many of my fellow-students were accustomed to attend there; and we all, and always, felt edified by his preaching. It was a common remark amongst us (in Hoxton academy), that if Mr. Clayton was not a *great* preacher, he was amongst the first of *good* preachers. We might be sometimes attracted by a country light, that occasionally blazed for a little season—a Jay, or a Thorpe, or a Raffles,—but if pleased with them, we were always profited by Mr. Clayton. Then his kindness to the students caused them to feel an attachment to him above all others, of that day.'

"Mr. Clayton had not only great readiness of utterance, but great aptitude, in turning to the best account extraordinary events or passing incidents. A striking instance of this has been communicated to me, by one, no longer with us, but formerly a member of his church.

"On a Sabbath morning, more than thirty years ago, and at the close of divine service, in this chapel, a tremendous storm burst over the city. Some hundreds of the assembled congregation found it impossible to quit the house of God, while the storm continued; and many strangers, passing through the Poultry, were glad to take refuge within the open doors. Perceiving, from the vestry, that the lower part of the chapel was crowded, Mr. Clayton, wishing to improve the opportunity, mounted a seat in front of the central door, and, with earnestness and tears, spoke of the storm of divine wrath, which shall overwhelm the ungodly at the last great day; concluding his remarks with these words, 'If there be among my hearers any accustomed to neglect the house of God, and to seek their own pleasure, on His holy day, I beg these persons will consider the words I have spoken, as especially addressed to them.' More than ten years after this circumstance, the lady who tells me the fact, was, along with a friend, walking down Aldersgate Street, towards Islington. Opposite the wall of the Charterhouse, they saw a pensive-looking woman, apparently far gone in consumption, led between two others, and bearing a letter and a phial, which evidently betokened a visit to some dispensary. The friends accosted the poor woman, and asked if they could be of any service to her; inquiring, at the same time, if she knew and loved the Saviour, and was thus prepared for the great change, which appeared so near. The woman's countenance brightened, as she replied, 'O yes!' They then inquired by what means she had been brought to know Christ, as her Saviour; to which she replied, 'Perhaps, ladies, you know the Poultry chapel? Well; I was once a giddy, thoughtless girl, till, one Sunday morning, I was proceeding towards

London Bridge, intending to join an excursion party on the river, when I was overtaken by a fearful storm. That storm drove me for shelter into the Poultry chapel. I soon saw a gentleman, in his robes, stand up on the seat of a pew, and heard him speak to the people, on the storm which was then raging. I felt that every word was meant for me; and, when the storm was over, instead of going on the river, I went home to pray.'

"This incident,—only one of many,—testifies the earnestness and unction, the power and tenderness, the readiness and aptitude, of Mr. Clayton's ministry; and many who are now with the spirits of the just made perfect, and a goodly company still with the church below, will have reason to bless God for ever, for what they have heard from him, in the Poultry chapel.*

"As a *pastor* Mr. Clayton was most exemplary; as not a few remain still to testify. Sickness, affliction, or trial of any kind, was sure to find him, as soon as he knew of it, in the dwellings of the poor or of the rich; for there was no respect of persons with him. His fitting words of consolation and encouragement abide still, in the memories of many; and his very presence and manner were, in themselves, a power in the chamber of suffering, or in the house of sorrow. He diffused his own spirit of kindness and Christian charity throughout the church; and its continued peace, and unbroken harmony, may, under God, in a great degree, be fairly traced to the happy leaven of his loving influence. In all its institutions, societies, and efforts for the glory of God, and the good of men, he took a lively interest, and cherished them with a fostering care."

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* Mr. Clayton used to mention the following fact with great pleasure and thankfulness:—"I was travelling in the country, some time since, and stopped at a roadside inn, to rest my horse, and obtain some refreshment for myself. After taking my chop, I inquired what I had to pay, when the landlady entered, and said, 'You have *nothing* to pay, Mr. Clayton. I owe to you, under God, the salvation of my soul.' I answered, 'My dear madam, I do not know that I ever saw you before.' 'That may be,' said she; 'but I used to hear you preach frequently in London; and one of your sermons was, I trust, the means of my conversion to God. I married soon afterwards, and settled here, and have, by the blessing of God, been kept to the present time. I am now a widow.' After some further conversation, I said, 'Well, what you have told me has caused me much gratification; but, as the body must be fed, as well as the soul, you must allow me to pay for what I have had.' 'Certainly not,' she replied; 'and I hope you will never come near this place again, without making this house your home.'"—T. A.

But three out of eight children survived Mr. Clayton. Three died in their childhood. His two surviving daughters married and settled; the elder, Mrs. Randall, in London, and the younger, Mrs. Rawson, first in Leeds, and subsequently at Clifton. His twin sons, George and William, died in the prime of manhood; one in America, the other in London. The youngest son, Edward, is the only one now remaining, bearing the family name; neither of Mr. Clayton's brothers having sons. He left behind him a large number of grandchildren, to cherish most loving remembrances of one of the excellent of the earth.

Enough has been said, in the course of the foregoing chapters, to enable the reader to form a correct estimate of Mr. John Clayton, mentally and spiritually. The introduction of one or two other features of character will assist in the completion of the portraiture.

His hospitality has already been spoken of. This was a marked feature in his character; visible, as long as he was able to discharge the duties of a host. At his table, his poorer brethren were as welcome as those who were more fortunate in their worldly circumstances; and in nothing was the genuine kindness of Mr. Clayton's heart more manifested, than in the delicate tact displayed in his attentions to such visitors,—speedily setting them at ease, by a behaviour at an equal remove from patronizing grandeur, and a pretence of humility. "Few are left so kind, so genial, so naturally hospitable. His great delight," as his friend Mr. Clarke observes, "was to give his fellow-mortals pleasure, and to do good." "He was," as has been truly observed, "a fine type of an English Christian gentleman." The judicious early training which he enjoyed, under his estimable parents, stamped this character upon him and his two brothers. They were remarkable for their courtly manners, which, under no circumstances of provocation, ever forsook them. Mr. John Clayton, in his intercourse either with high or low, with adversaries or friends, never forgot the apostolic precepts, "Be courteous: Honour all men."

He was a man of remarkable cheerfulness, naturally; and so no wonder that, while he was firm in his resistance to everything which bore upon it the character of irreverence or irreligiousness, he was a foe to everything savouring of puritanical severity. He made no objections to harmless recreation—knowing that the bow must at times be unbent, if its true elasticity is to be preserved. Some one asked him his opinion of chess, to which he replied, "Anything—even prayer and reading the Bible—may be carried to excess. As to the game of chess, if used only as a recreation, I call it a very harmless one; and only wish I was clever enough to play it."

Mr. John Clayton's political creed, which he seems to have received intact from his father, savoured more of conservatism than liberalism; and on account of this he was not infrequently the subject of strong animadversions from those who thought that the avowed sentiments of a man in such a position, and which sentiments were so different from the great mass of his brethren, might have a mischievous effect upon persons in authority, with many of whom, as a supposed representative man, he often came in contact. These might be inclined to form their views of the opinions of Nonconformists from him; and regard all others as turbulent and discontented persons, possessed of the spirit of the demagogue, and eager only for change. This misapprehension, however, if it ever existed, did not last long. The Conservative party—which, during one of its tenures of office, out of high personal respect for Mr. Clayton, offered him an appointment for one of his sons,—soon found that he stood comparatively alone in his opinions; and that those who differed from him, and were making their voices heard through the length and breadth of the land, in connexion with politico-ecclesiastical questions, were his equals in mind, position, and influence, and must and ought to be attended to.

An utter abstinence on the part of ministers, from a manifestation of interest in the great questions of the day, in which the hopes and desires and passions of the masses is bound up, is neither right nor wise. One of the charges brought against preachers of the Gospel—at a recent conference of working men with several ministers and laymen—was their supposed want of sympathy with them in worldly matters. This, some of the speakers, at the meeting referred to, represented as one cause of the indifference or hostility of the people to public worship; and their unwillingness to listen to the teachers of Christianity. Doubtless, in all this, there was no small amount of exaggeration; but still there was enough of truth in the statement to give some force to their objections, against attendance on the preaching of such men.

Ministers, like Nehemiah, are doing a great work, and ought to be unwilling to come down, at every summons, from their position on the walls of Jerusalem; but there are seasons and occasions when the duty seems imperative to do so; and when the judicious intermixture of the thoughtful and the godly with those who are too apt to be led away by impulse and shortsightedness, or influenced by selfishness and class views, may prove of incalculable service; may avert threatening calamities, and tend to secure a national good.

Mr. Clayton thought differently; but his opinions were those of a minority. He held his views conscientiously; and claimed a forbearance, on this account, which was not always tendered him. He was too manly and generous, and too well acquainted with the character of his brethren who differed from him, to doubt the honesty and sincerity of their opinions; so that, though he might deprecate the course they pursued, he neither denied their right, nor impugned their motives. He lived to see many of his fears to be unreal; and, probably, had he entered public life in the present generation, instead of half a century ago, he might have been as liberal as he was unquestionably conservative. Indeed, in one of his latest communications to his flock, at the Poultry, he admitted the necessity for "a little more conformity to the spirit of the times in which we live, than his moderate principles would admit."

Reference has been made to his liberality. This was as constant and continuous as it was generous,—according to his means. Among his papers was found the following memorandum, written by his own hand. It is an account of subscriptions, donations, and contributions, principally in the interest of Nonconformity, during forty-five years of his ministry. It does not refer to anything obtained from others, but his own pecuniary offerings to the cause of Christ, derived from his private income.

“Account of my subscriptions, donations, and contributions, principally in the interest of Nonconformity, during forty-five years of my ministry and pastorship;—not including sums obtained by collections, but sacrifices from my income and private property:—

1851.	£.	s.	d.
Six societies, annually, for 45 years	270	0	0
Twenty-one additional, for 25 years	525	0	0
Ten additional, for 15 years	150	0	0
Building cases—chapels, schools, colleges—for 45 years	1225	0	0
Donations to different societies, in sums of £1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 20, 50, and £100 each, for 45 years	2212	10	0
Donations to Poultry chapel—original gift of £500, and subsequent resignation of £200 per annum, for 10 years, regularly remitted to Mr. Hammond; together with building the school, gallery, repairs, &c.	2547	13	0
Donations to distressed ministers, to pay their debts, and relieve them from various embarrassments	850	0	0
Travelling expenses, on deputations for societies, which I always gave for 35 years	350	0	0
Assisting and supporting candidates for the ministry, for above 40 years	920	0	0
	£9050	3	0”

From this it will be perceived that about one-sixth of the cost of the Poultry chapel, which, for more than a quarter of a century was the scene of his labours, was paid by the minister himself. If, as has been said, his resources were ample,—though, as usual, the report was greatly exaggerated,—his liberality kept pace with them, as a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God.

Chapter XXVI.

THE CLAYTON FAMILY.

ESTIMATE OF THE CHARACTER OF FATHER AND SONS.—THEIR COURTESY AND KINDNESS.—THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO LITERARY FAME.—THEIR DEVOTION TO THEIR WORK.—THE SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS.

I HAVE thus striven to perform the task of embalming the memory of the Clayton Family;—a task which was assigned to me by my departed friend, who is, himself, so conspicuous a personage in the group. I have preferred to let the several members of that household speak for themselves, whenever I could do so; and, for the most part, to leave the readers of this volume to form their own judgment of the characters, intellectual and spiritual, of those who have been brought before them. But few words are necessary to conclude these sketches.

That the father and his sons were men of mark, none will question. They were, in the highest sense of the word, gentlemen. It was natural to them to be so; and what was natural was cultivated, from a deep sense of duty to God, and an anxiety to commend themselves to others, as ministers of Christ's Gospel, by a courteous mode of behaviour, as well as by fidelity to truth, in their teachings. This courtesy was displayed towards all; and the members of their own family were especially the objects of it,—as has more than once been noticed; no familiarity of intercourse being suffered to diminish their high estimate of the excellency of this grace, which was manifested as much in minor as in greater matters. A paragraph, in a letter which George sent to his brother William and family, gives us his views upon this subject, in which the others all shared: "I ought to offer thanks to you, for having accepted and appreciated, in a manner so far above all their value, the very minute attentions I was permitted to show to the travellers at Brighton. It is a maxim that love is shown in little things; and as much in receiving them with kindness, as in performing them with readiness. Great occasions and urgent exigencies are of rare occurrence; these little things make up the texture of every passing day; and relative affection is the principle which puts us in readiness for the performance of those numberless offices of love, in the receipt of which so large a portion of the happiness of this short and transitory life consists. It is a principle ductile as gold; and of such versatility of application, that, while it shrinks not from the greatest enterprises, it scorns not the humblest services from those whom it cherishes."

All the Claytons were naturally gifted with mental powers of a high, though not of the highest, order; and these were well developed by study and observation. They displayed an exceeding judiciousness, in never attempting to soar higher than they knew their breadth of wing would carry them. Tact, skill, a wise choice of time and place, in the disposition of forces, are as necessary for effective oratory, as for strategical success; and he who is able and content to manage a battalion, while he could not manœuvre a brigade, is more likely to receive the thanks of his commander, than if he had been tempted to some more ambitious undertaking. The Claytons were sensible men, and kept to their proper post. The father never professed anything in the way of learning. He was too early engaged in preaching, to make much progress in scholastic lore, which, in his day, among dissenters from the Established

Church, was but slightly attended to. No London University then existed; and the so-called national ones, by their exclusiveness, ostracized a goodly portion of the nation. When Mr. Clayton's sons entered the ministry, more regard was paid to the matter of a polite education; and although none of the brothers made any pretensions to scholarship,* yet all three had a respectable acquaintance with classical literature; and George especially was proficient, as a French scholar, so as to be able, on the occasion of the ordination of a French missionary, to address the charge to him in his own language.

Mr. John Clayton published several single sermons and addresses, connected with ordinary or extraordinary seasons in his ministry; and, after his retirement, projected a three-volumed edition of discourses, delivered during his pastorate at the Poultry; but after sending forth the first volume, he abandoned his design.

Mr. George Clayton issued a large number of separate sermons, some of them funeral discourses; and one goodly sized volume on *Faith and Practice*, which found great acceptableness with the religious public. Mr. William Clayton's three publications have already been mentioned.

But the forte of all was energetic, devoted, and systematic labours, in connexion with the pulpit, platform, and pastorate, rather than with the press. They preferred—far more from a simple sense of duty than from inclination—to forego the pleasures of literature, that they might fulfil their high mission to "preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season;" and although they occupy no position, have no niche of fame assigned to them, among the scholars or literary magnates of the church of Christ, they have their reward, in the large number of souls awakened, enlightened, and edified in their faith, by the untiring exertions of a lifelong ministry. "They counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord." God signally answered the prayer of the venerable John Wesley, who, just before his death, placed his hands on the heads of the two brothers, John and George, who were taken to see him, and with patriarchal fervour, said, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."

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* Mr. John Clayton's name is frequently seen with the initials M.A. attached to it. *He* did not so write it; as he never took any degree: his residence at Edinburgh was too brief to allow of its being done.

As this volume abundantly proves, the father and his sons were greatly honoured in their ministry. It would be invidious, even if it were possible, to point out who of the four achieved the highest success. That should not be the basis of *our* estimate of a minister's work, as we believe it will not be that of God, in the last day. According to what a man *hath*, and *does* with that which he hath, will he stand in judgment; not according to the visible results of his labours. But if estimated by these, great was the reward of these good men; for they were all permitted to gather into the garner many sheaves, from the wide harvest-field they cultivated; and they did so with rejoicing.

All were eminently Christian men; and their religion revealed itself before the world in a consistent course of life; although each in secret knew the sore place in his own heart, and felt deeply and keenly its plague, that often made him smart and tremble with apprehension. The lessons the sons had learned from their parents of the duty and privilege of habits of devotion, were faithfully remembered and practised to their latest hour; and this, above all things—talents or tact, opportunities or openings,—was the secret of their acceptability with the public, and the main cause of the usefulness of their lives.

They have now all passed away; but their memory will for many days remain, as a fragrant odour, in the churches with which they were severally identified, and among the various social circles, in the midst of which they moved; while the honour paid to them during their lifetime, and which is not withheld from their names, now that they have passed away to the better country, will be a stimulus to all who, sustaining the same office, desire and aim to be followers of those who, having "fought a good fight, and kept the faith," finished their course with joy, and now "inherit the promises."

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